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3

THE DRAMATIC
WORKS
OF
COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CONTAINING

The CARELESS HUSBAND, a Comedy.

The RIVAL FOOLS, a Comedy.

The LADY'S LAST STAKE, a Comedy.

RICHARD III. a Tragedy.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. RIVINGTON and SONS, C. BATHURST,
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NICOLL, and S. BLADON.

M.DCC.LXXVII.

THE

CARLTON COLLEGE

A

CHURCH

OF THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF THE NORTH DAKOTA TERRITORY



T H E
CARELESS HUSBAND.
A
C O M E D Y.

*Yet none Sir Fopling Him, or Him can call :
He's Knight o' th' Shire, and represents you all.*

Prol. to Sir Fop.

Qui capit, ille facit.



To the Most Illustrious

J O H N,

D U K E of A R G Y L E.

THIS Play, at last, through many difficulties, has made way to throw itself at Your Grace's feet: and considering what well-meant attempts were made to intercept it in its course to so great an honour, I have had reason not to think it intirely successful, till (where my ambition always design'd it) I found it safe in your protection: which, when several means had fail'd of making it less worthy of, the spleen ended with the old good-nature that was offer'd to my first Play, *viz.* That it was none of my own: but that's a praise I have indeed some reason to be proud of, since Your Grace, from evincing circumstances, is able to divide the malice from the compliment.

The best Criticks have long and justly complain'd, that the coarseness of most characters in our late Comedies, have been unfit entertainments for People of Quality, especially the Ladies: and therefore I was long in hopes that some able pen (whose expectations did not

DEDICATION.

hang upon the profits of success) wou'd generously attempt to reform the Town into a better taste than the World generally allows 'em: but nothing of that kind having lately appear'd, that would give me an opportunity of being wise at another's expence, I found it impossible any longer to resist the secret temptation of my vanity, and so even struck the first blow myself: and the event has now convinc'd me, that whoever sticks closely to Nature, can't easily write above the understanding of the Galleries, tho' at the same time he may possibly deserve applause of the Boxes.

This Play before its trial on the Stage was examined by several People of Quality, that came into Your Grace's opinion of its being a just, a proper, and diverting attempt in Comedy; but few of 'em carried the compliment beyond their private approbation: for when I was wishing for a little farther hope, they stopt short of Your Grace's penetration, and only kindly wished me what they seem'd to fear, and you assur'd me of, a general success.

But Your Grace has been pleas'd, not only to encourage me with your judgment; but have likewise by your favourable influence in the bounties that were rais'd for me the third and sixth day, defended me against any hazards of an entire disappointment from so bold an undertaking: and therefore, whatever the world may think of me, as one they call a *Poet*, yet I am confident, as Your Grace understands

DEDICATION.

me, I shall not want your belief, when I assure you that this *Dedication* is the result of a profound acknowledgment, an artless inclination, proudly glad and grateful.

And if the Dialogue of the following Scenes flows with more easy turn of thought and spirit, than what I have usually produced; I shall not yet blame some people for saying 'tis not my own, unless they knew, at the same time, I owe most of it to the many stolen observations I have made from Your Grace's manner of conversing.

And if ever the influence of Your Grace's more shining qualities should persuade me to attempt a *Tragedy*, I shall then, with the same freedom, borrow all the ornamental virtues of my Hero, where now I only am indebted for part of the Fine Gentleman. Greatness of birth and mind, sweetness of temper, flowing from the fixt and native principles of courage and of honour, are beauties that I reserve for a farther opportunity of expressing the zeal and gratitude of,

My Lord,

Dec. 15, Your Grace's most Obedient,

1704. Most Oblig'd and Humble Servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

A 4

T H E
P R O L O G U E.

*O*F all the various Vices of the Age,
 And shoals of fools expos'd upon the Stage,
 How few are lusty that call for Satire's rage !
 What can you think to see our Plays so full
 Of Madmen, Coxcombs, and the driveling Fool ?
 Of Cits, of Sharpers, Rakes, and roaring Bullies,
 Of Cheats, of Cuckolds, Aldermen and Cullies ?
 Wou'd not one swear, 'twere taken for a rule,
 That Satire's rod in the Dramatick School,
 Was only meant for the incorrigible Fool ?
 As if too Vice and Folly were confin'd
 To the vile scum alone of human kind,
 Creatures a Muse shou'd scorn ; such abject trash
 Deserves not Satire's but the Hangman's lash.
 Wretches so far shut out from sense of shame,
 Newgate or Bedlam only shou'd reclaim ;
 For Satire ne'er was meant to make wild monsters tame.
 No, Sirs ———

We rather think the persons fit for Plays,
 Are they whose birth and education says
 They've every help that shou'd improve mankind,
 Yet still live slaves to a vile tainted mind ;

P R O L O G U E.

*Such as in wit are often seen t' abound,
 And yet have some weak part, where Folly's found:
 For follies sprout like weeds, bighest in fruitful ground. }
 And 'tis observ'd, the garden of the mind }
 To no infective weed's so much inclin'd, }
 As the rank pride that some from affectation find. }
 A folly too well known to make its court
 With most success among the better sort.
 Such are the persons we to-day provide,
 And Nature' fools for once are laid aside.
 This is the ground on which our Play we build;
 But in the structure must to judgment yield:
 And where the Poet fails in art, or care,
 We beg your wonted mercy to the Player.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Lord *Morelove*,

Lord *Foppington*,

Sir *Charles Easy*,

Mr. *Powel*.

Mr. *Cibber*,

Mr. *Wilks*.

W O M E N.

Lady *Betty Modish*,

Lady *Easy*,

Lady *Graveairs*,

Mrs. *Edging*, Woman to Lady *Easy*,

Mrs. *Oldfield*.

Mrs. *Knight*.

Mrs. *More*.

Mrs. *Lucas*.

SCENE, WINDSOR.

T H E
CARELESS HUSBAND.

A. C. T I. SCENE I.

SCENE E, *Sir Charles Easy's Lodgings.*

Enter Lady Easy alone.

L. EASY.

WAS ever woman's spirit, by an injurious husband, broke like mine? A vile, licentious man! Must he bring home his follies too! Wrong me with my very servant! O! how tedious a relief is patience! And yet in my condition 'tis the only remedy: for to reproach him with my wrongs is taking on myself the means of a redress, bidding defiance to his falshood, and naturally but provokes him to undo me. The uneasy thought of my continual jealousy may teize him to a fixt aversion; and hitherto, tho' he neglects, I cannot think he hates me.—It must be so! Since I want power to please him, he never shall upbraid me with an attempt of making him uneasy—My eyes and tongue shall yet be blind and silent to my wrongs; nor would I have him think my virtue cou'd suspect him, 'till by some gross apparent proof of his misdoing, he forces me to see—and to forgive it.

Enter Edging hastily.

Edg. O madam!

L. Easy. What's the matter?

Edg. I have the strangest thing to shew your ladyship
—such a discovery—

L. Easy. You are resolv'd to make it without much ceremony, I find; what's the business, pray?

Edg. The business, madam, I have not patience to tell you, I am out of breath at the very thoughts on't, I shall not be able to speak this half hour.

L. Easy. Not to the purpose I believe! But methinks you talk impertinently with a great deal of ease.

Edg. Nay, madam, perhaps not so impertinent as your Ladyship thinks; there's that will speak to purpose, I am sure—A base man—

[Gives a Letter.]

L. Easy. What's this, an open letter! Whence comes it?

Edg. Nay, read it, madam, you'll soon guess.—If these are the tricks of husbands, keep me a maid still, say I.

L. Easy. *[Looking on the Supercription.]* To Sir Charles Easy! Ha! Too well I know this hateful hand—O my heart! but I must veil my jealousy, which 'tis not fit this creature should suppose I am acquainted with. *[Aside.]*
—This direction is to your master, how came you by it?

Edg. Why, madam, as my master was lying down, after he came in from hunting, he sent me into his dressing-room to fetch his snuff-box out of his waistcoat-pocket; and so as I was searching for the box, madam, there I found this wicked letter from a mistress; which I had no sooner read, but, I declare it, my very blood rose at him again; methought I could have torn him and her to pieces.

L. Easy. Intolerable! This odious thing's jealous of him herself, and wants me to join with her in a revenge upon him.—Sure I am fallen indeed! But 'twere to make me lower yet, to let her think I understand her.

[Aside.]

Edg. Nay, pray, madam, read it, you'll be out of patience at it.

L. Easy. You are bold, mistress; has my indulgence or your master's good humour flatter'd you into the assurance of reading his letters? a liberty I never gave myself.—Here—lay it where you had it immediately—shou'd he know of your sauciness, 'twou'd not be my favour cou'd protect you. *[Exit L. Easy.]*

Edg. Your favour! Marry come up! Sure I don't depend upon your favour!—'Tis not come to that, I hope—Poor creature—don't you think I am my master's mistress for nothing?—You shall find, madam, I won't be snapt up as I have been—Not but it vexes me, to think she shou'd not be as uneasy as I. I am sure he is a base man to me, and I could cry my eyes out that she shou'd not think him as bad to her every jot. If I am wrong'd, sure she may very well expect it, that is but his wife.—A conceited thing—she need not be so easy neither—I am as handsome as she, I hope—Here's my master—I'll try whether I am to be huff'd by her, or no. *[Walks behind.]*

Enter Sir Charles Easy.

Sir Cha. So! The day is come again—Life but rises to another stage, and the same dull journey is before us. How like children do we judge of happiness! When I was stinted in my fortune, almost every thing was a pleasure to me, because most things then being out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for 'em; now Fortune's in my hand, she's as insipid as an old acquaintance—It's mighty silly, faith—just the same thing by my wife too; I am told she's extremely handsome—nay, and have heard a great many people say she is certainly the best woman in the world—Why, I don't know but she may, yet I could never find that her person or good qualities gave me any concern—In my eye, the woman has no more charms than my mother.

Edg. Hum!—he takes no notice of me yet—I'll let

let him see, I can take as little notice of him. [*She walks by him gravely, he turns her about and holds her, she struggles.*] Pray, Sir——

Sir *Char.* A pretty pert air that——I'll humour it——What's the matter, child? Are you not well? Kiss me, huffy.

Edg. No, the deuce fetch me if I do.

Sir *Char.* Has any thing put thee out of humour, love?

Edg. No, sir, 'tis not worth my being out of humour, at——tho' if ever you have any thing to say to me again, I'll be burn'd.

Sir *Char.* Somebody has bely'd me to thee.

Edg. No, sir, 'tis you have bely'd yourself to me. Did not I ask you when you first made a fool of me, if you would be always constant to me, and did not you say, I might be sure you wou'd? And here, instead of that, you are going on in your old intrigue with my Lady *Graveairs*.——

Sir *Char.* So——

Edg. Beside, don't you suffer my lady to huff me every day as if I were her dog, or had no more concern with you——I declare I won't bear it, and she shan't think to huff me.——For aught I know, I am as agreeable as she; and tho' she dares not take any notice of your baseness to her, you shan't think to use me so——and so pray take your nasty letter.——I know the hand well enough.——For my part, I won't stay in the family to be abus'd at this rate: I that have refus'd lords and dukes for your sake; I'd have you to know, sir, I have had as many blue and green ribbons after me, for aught I know, as would have made me a Falbala apron.

Sir *Char.* My Lady *Graveairs*! my nasty letter! and I won't stay in the family! Death!——I'm in a pretty condition.——What an unlimited privilege has this jade got from being a whore?

Edg. I suppose, sir, you think to use every body as you do your wife.

Sir *Char.* My wife! hah! Come hither, Mrs. *Edging*; hark you, Drab——

[*Seizing her by the Shoulder.*]

Edg. Oh!

Sir Char. When you speak of my wife; you are to say your lady, and you are never to speak of your lady to me in any regard of her being my wife—for look you, child, you are not her strumpet, but mine, therefore I only give you leave to be saucy with me—In the next place, you are never to suppose there is any such person as my Lady *Graveairs*; and lastly, my pretty one, how came you by this letter?

Edg. It's no matter, perhaps.

Sir Char. Ay, but if you shou'd not tell me quickly, how are you sure I won't take a great piece of flesh out of your shoulder, my dear? [Shakes her.]

Edg. O lud! O lud! I will tell you, sir.

Sir Char. Quickly then. [Again.]

Edg. Oh! I took it out of your pocket, sir.

Sir Char. When?

Edg. Oh! this morning, when you sent me for your snuff-box.

Sir Char. And your ladyship's pretty curiosity has look'd it over, I presume—ha— [Again.]

Edg. O lud! dear sir, don't be angry—indeed I'll never touch one again.

Sir Char. I don't believe you will, and I'll tell you how you shall be sure you never will.

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Char. By stedfastly believing, that the next time you offer it, you will have your pretty white neck twist-ed behind you.

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Char. And you will be sure to remember every thing I have said to you?

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Char. And now, child, I was not angry with your person, but your follies; which since I find you are a little sensible of—don't be wholly discourag'd—for I believe I—I shall have occasion for you again.

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir *Char.* In the mean time, let me hear no more of your lady, child.

Edg. No, sir.

Sir *Char.* Here she comes, be gone.

Edg. Yes, sir — Oh! I was never so frighten'd in my life. [Exit.]

Sir *Char.* So! good discipline makes good soldiers — It often puzzles me to think, from my own carelessness, and my wife's continual good humour, whether she really knows any thing of the strength of my forces — I'll fift her a little.

Enter Lady Easy.

My dear, how do you do? You are dress'd very early to-day; are you going out?

L. Easy. Only to church, my dear.

Sir *Char.* Is it so late then?

L. Easy. The bell has just rung.

Sir *Char.* Well, child, how does *Windsor* air agree with you? Do you find yourself any better yet? or have you a mind to go to *London* again?

L. Easy. No, indeed, my dear; the air's so very pleasant, that if it were a place of less company, I cou'd be content to end my days here.

Sir *Char.* Pr'ythee, my dear, what sort of company would most please you?

L. Easy. When business would permit it, yours; and in your absence a sincere friend, that were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of our condition.

Sir *Char.* Are you then really very happy, my dear?

L. Easy. Why should you question it? [Smiling on him.]

Sir *Char.* Because I fancy I am not so good to you as I should be.

L. Easy. Pshah!

Sir *Char.* Nay, the deuce take me if I don't really confess myself so bad, that I have often wonder'd how any woman of your sense, rank, and person, could think it worth her while to have so many useless good qualities.

L. Easy. Fy, my dear.

Sir Char. By my soul, I'm serious.

L. Easy. I can't boast of my good qualities, nor if I could, do I believe you think 'em useless.

Sir Char. Nay, I submit to you — Don't you find 'em so? Do you perceive that I am one tittle the better husband for your being so good a wife?

L. Easy. Pshaw! you jest with me.

Sir Char. Upon my life I don't — Tell me truly, was you never jealous of me?

L. Easy. Did I ever give you any sign of it?

Sir Char. Um — that's true — but do you really think I never gave you occasion?

L. Easy. That's an odd question — but suppose you had?

Sir Char. Why then, what good has your virtue done you, since all the good qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?

L. Easy. What occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?

Sir Char. I given you occasion! — Fy! my dear — you may be sure — I — look you, that is not the thing, but still a — (Death, what a blunder have I made!) — a still, I say, madam, you shan't make me believe you have never been jealous of me: not that you ever had any real cause, but I know women of your principles have more pride than those that have no principles at all; and where there is pride, there must be some jealousy — so that if you are jealous, my dear, you know you wrong me, and —

L. Easy. Why then, upon my word, my dear, I don't know that ever I wrong'd you that way in my life.

Sir Char. But suppose I had given a real cause to be jealous, how would you do then?

L. Easy. It must be a very substantial one that makes me jealous.

Sir Char. Say it were a substantial one; suppose now I were well with a woman of your own acquaintance, that under pretence of frequent visits to you, should only come

to carry on an affair with me——Suppose now my Lady Graveairs and I were great——

L. *Easy*. Wou'd I could not suppose it ! [*Aside*.

Sir *Char*. If I come off here, I believe I am pretty safe. [*Aside*.] —— Suppose, I say, my lady and I were so very familiar, that not only yourself, but half the Town should see it !

L. *Easy*. Then I should cry myself sick in some dark closet, and forget my tears when you spoke kindly to me.

Sir *Char*. The most convenient piece of virtue sure that ever wife was mistress of. [*Aside*.

L. *Easy*. But pray, my dear, did you ever think that I had any ill thoughts of my Lady Graveairs ?

Sir *Char*. O fy ! child ; only you know she and I us'd to be a little free sometimes, so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any harm in it : but since I find you very easy in it, I think myself oblig'd to tell you, that upon my soul, my dear, I have so little regard to her person, that the deuce take me, if I would not as soon have an affair with thy woman.

L. *Easy*. Indeed, my dear, I should as soon suspect you with one as t'other.

Sir *Char*. Poor dear——should'st thou——give me a kiss.

L. *Easy*. Pshah ! you don't care to kiss me.

Sir *Char*. By my soul I do——I wish I may die if I don't think you a very fine woman.

L. *Easy*. I only wish you'd think me a good wife. [*Kisses her*.] But pray, my dear, what has made you so strangely inquisitive ?

Sir *Char*. Inquisitive !——Why——a——I don't know, one's always saying one foolish thing or another——Toll le roll. [*Sings and talks*.] My dear, what ! are we never to have any ball here ? Toll le roll. I fancy I could recover my dancing again, if I would but practise it. Toll, loll, loll !

L. *Easy*. This excess of carelessness to me excuses half his vices : if I can make him once think seriously——time yet may be my friend.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Lord Morelove gives his service —

Sir Char. Lord Morelove! Where is he?

Serv. At the Chocolate-house; he called me to him as I went by, and bid me tell your Honour he'll wait upon you presently.

L. Easy. I thought you had not expected him here again this season, my dear.

Sir Char. I thought so too, but you see there's no depending upon the resolution of a man that's in love.

L. Easy. Is there a chair?

Serv. Yes, madam.

[Exit Servant.]

L. Easy. I suppose Lady Betty Modish has drawn him hither.

Sir Char. Ah poor soul, for all his bravery, I am afraid so.

L. Easy. Well, my dear, I han't time to ask my Lord how he does now; you'll excuse me to him, but I hope you'll make him dine with us.

Sir Char. I'll ask him. If you see Lady Betty at Prayers make her dine too, but don't take any notice of my Lord's being in town.

L. Easy. Very well! If I should not meet her there, I'll call at her lodgings.

Sir Char. Do so.

L. Easy. My dear, your servant.

[Exit L. Easy.]

Sir Char. My dear, I'm yours. Well! one way or other this woman will certainly bring about her business with me at last; for tho' she can't make me happy in her own person, she lets me be so intolerably easy with the women that can, that she has at least brought me into a fair way of being as weary of them too.

Enter Servant and Lord Morelove.

Serv. Sir, my Lord's come.

L. Mor. Dear Charles!

Sir Char. My dear Lord! this is an happiness un-

dreamt of; I little thought to have seen you at *Windfor* again this season; I concluded of course, that books and solitude had secur'd you till winter.

L. Mor. Nay, I did not think of coming myself, but I found myself not very well in *London*, so I thought—a little hunting, and this air——

Sir Char. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Mor. What do you laugh at?

Sir Char. Only because you should not go on with your story: if you did but see how silly a man fumbles for an excuse, when he is a little ashamed of being in love, you wou'd not wonder what I laugh at. Ha! ha!

L. Mor. Thou art a very happy fellow——nothing touches thee——always easy——Then you conclude I follow Lady *Betty* again?

Sir Char. Yes, faith do I: and to make you easy, my Lord, I cannot see why a man that can ride fifty miles after a poor stag, should be ashamed of running twenty in chace of a fine woman, that in all probability will make him so much the better sport too. [*Embracing.*]

L. Mor. Dear *Charles*, don't flatter my distemper, I own I still follow her: Do you think her charms have power to excuse me to the world?

Sir Char. Ay! ay! a fine woman's an excuse for any thing; and the scandal of her being in jest, is a jest itself: we are all forc'd to be their fools, before we can be their favourites.

L. Mor. You are willing to give me hope; but I can't believe she has the least degree of inclination for me.

Sir Char. I don't know that——I'm sure her pride likes you, and that's generally your fine ladies darling passion.

L. Mor. Do you suppose if I could grow indifferent, it wou'd touch her?

Sir Char. Sting her to the heart——Will you take my advice?

L. Mor. I have no relief but that. Had I not thee now and then to talk an hour, my life were insupportable.

Sir Char. I am sorry for that, my Lord——but mind:

what I say to you——But hold, first let me know the particulars of your late quarrel with her.

L. Mor. Why——about three weeks ago, when I was last here, at *Windfor*, she had for some days treated me with a little more reserve, and another with more freedom than I found myself easy at.

Sir Char. Who was that other?

L. Mor. One of my Lord *Foppington's* gang, the pert coxcomb that's just come to a small estate, and a great periwig——he that sings himself among the women——What d'ye call him——He won't speak to a Commoner when a Lord's in company——You always see him with a cane dangling at his button, his breast open, no gloves, one eye tuck'd under his hat, and a tooth-pick——*Startup*, that's his name.

Sir Char. O! I have met him in a visit——but pray go on.

L. Mor. So, disputing with her about the conduct of women, I took the liberty to tell her how far I thought she err'd in hers; she told me I was rude, and that she would never believe any man could love a woman, that thought her in the wrong in any thing she had a mind to, at least if he dar'd to tell her so——This provok'd me into her whole character, with as much spite and civil malice, as I have seen her bestow upon a woman of true beauty, when the men first toasted her: so in the middle of my wisdom, she told me, she desir'd to be alone, that I would take my odious proud heart along with me, and trouble her no more——I——bow'd very low, and as I left the room, I vow'd I never wou'd, and that my proud heart should never be humbled by the outside of a fine woman——About an hour after, I whipp'd into my chaise for *London*, and have never seen her since.

Sir Char. Very well; and how did you find your proud heart by that time you got to *Hounslow*?

L. Mor. I am almost asham'd to tell you——I found her so much in the right, that I curs'd my pride for contradicting her at all, and began to think according to her maxim, that no woman could be in the wrong to a man that she had in her power.

Sir *Char.* Ha! ha! Well, I'll tell you what you shall do. You can see her without trembling, I hope?

L. *Mor.* Not if she receives me well.

Sir *Char.* If she receives you well, you will have no occasion for what I am going to say to you——First, you shall dine with her.

L. *Mor.* How! where! when!

Sir *Char.* Here! here! at two o'clock.

L. *Mor.* Dear *Charles*!

Sir *Char.* My wife's gone to invite her; when you see her first, be neither too humble nor too stubborn; let her see by the ease in your behaviour, you are still pleas'd in being near her, while she is upon reasonable terms with you. This will either open the door of an *eclaircissement*, or quite shut it against you——and if she is still resolved to keep you out——

L. *Mor.* Nay, if she insults me then, perhaps I may recover pride enough to rally her by an over-acted submission.

Sir *Char.* Why, you improve, my Lord; this is the very thing I was going to propose to you.

L. *Mor.* Was it, faith! Hark you, dare you stand by me?

Sir *Char.* Dare I! ay, to my last drop of assurance, against all the insolent airs of the proudest Beauty in *Christendom*.

L. *Mor.* Nay, then defiance to her——We two——Thou hast inspir'd me, I find myself as valiant as a flatter'd coward.

Sir *Char.* Courage, my Lord—I'll warrant we beat her.

L. *Mor.* My blood stirs at the very thought on't; I long to be engag'd.

Sir *Char.* She'll certainly give ground, when she once sees you are thoroughly provok'd.

L. *Mor.* Dear *Charles*, thou art a friend indeed.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my Lord *Foppington* gives his service, and if your Honour's at leisure, he'll wait on you as soon as he's dress'd.

L. Mor. Lord Foppington! is he in Town?

Sir Char. Yes——I heard last night he was come. Give my service to his Lordship, and tell him I shall be glad he'll do me the honour of his company here at dinner. [*Exit Serv.*] We may have occasion for him in our design upon Lady Betty.

L. Mor. What use can we make of him?

Sir Char. We'll see when he comes; at least there's no danger in him; not but I suppose you know he's your rival.

L. Mor. Psha! a coxcomb.

Sir Char. Nay, don't despise him neither——he's able to give you advice; for tho' he's in love with the same woman, yet to him she has not charms enough to give a minute's pain.

L. Mor. Pr'ythee, what sense has he of love?

Sir Char. Faith, very near as much as a man of sense ought to have; I grant you, he knows not how to value a woman truly deserving, but he has a pretty just esteem for most ladies about Town.

L. Mor. That he follows, I grant you——for he seldom visits any of extraordinary reputation.

Sir Char. Have a care, I have seen him at Lady Betty Modish's——

L. Mor. To be laugh'd at.

Sir Char. Don't be too confident of that; the women now begin to laugh with him, not at him: for he really sometimes rallies his own humour with so much ease and pleasantry, that a great many women begin to think he has no follies at all, and those he has, have been as much owing to his youth, and a great estate, as want of natural wit: 'tis true, he's often a bubble to his pleasures, but he has always been wisely vain enough to keep himself from being too much the ladies humble servant in love.

L. Mor. There indeed I almost envy him.

Sir Char. The easiness of his opinion upon the Sex, will go near to pique you——We must have him.

L. Mor. As you please——But what shall we do with ourselves till dinner?

Sir Char. What think you of a party at piquet?

L. Mor. O! you are too hard for me.

Sir Char. Fy! fy! what when you play with his Grace?

L. Mor. Upon my soul he gives me three points.

Sir Char. Does he? why then you shall give me but two—Here, fellow, get cards. *Allons.* [Exit.



ACT II. SCENE I.

The SCENE, Lady Betty Modish's Lodgings.

Enter Lady Betty, and Lady Easy, meeting.

L. Betty. O H! my dear! I am overjoy'd to see you! I am strangely happy to-day; I have just receiv'd my new scarf from *London*, and you are most critically come to give me your opinion of it.

L. Easy. O! your servant, madam, I am a very indifferent judge, you know: What, is it with sleeves?

L. Bet. O! 'tis impossible to tell you what it is!—'Tis all extravagance both in mode and fancy, my dear; I believe there's six thousand yards of edging in it—Then such an enchanting slope from the elbow—something so new, so lively, so noble, so coquet and charming—but you shall see it, my dear—

L. Easy. Indeed I won't, my dear; I am resolv'd to mortify you for being so wrongfully fond of a trifle.

L. Bet. Nay, now, my dear, you are ill-natur'd.

L. Easy. Why truly, I'm half angry to see a woman of your sense, so warmly concern'd in the care of her outside; for when we have taken our best pains about it, 'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting value.

L. Bet. Ah! my dear! my dear! you have been a married woman to a fine purpose indeed, that know so little of the taste of mankind: take my word, a new fashion upon a fine woman, is often a greater proof of her value, than you are aware of.

L. Easy. That I can't comprehend, for you see among the men, nothing's more ridiculous than a new fashion. Those of the first ^{rank} ~~rank~~ are always the last that come into 'em.

L. Bet. That is, because the only merit of a man is his sense; but doubtless the greatest value of a woman is her beauty; an homely woman at the head of a fashion would not be allowed in it by the men, and consequently not followed by the women: so that to be successful in one's fancy, is an evident sign of one's being admir'd, and I always take admiration for the best proof of beauty; and beauty certainly is the source of power, as power in all creatures is the height of happiness.

L. Easy. At this rate you would rather be thought beautiful than good.

L. Bet. As I had rather command than obey: the wisest homely woman can't make a man of sense of a fool, but the veryest fool of a beauty shall make an ass of a Statesman; so that in short, I can't see a woman of spirit has any business in this world but to dress—and make the men like her.

L. Easy. Do you suppose this is a principle the men of sense will admire you for?

L. Bet. I do suppose, that when I suffer any man to like my person, he shan't dare to find fault with my principle.

L. Easy. But men of sense are not so easily humbled.

L. Bet. The easiest of any; one has ten thousand times the trouble with a coxcomb.

L. Easy. Nay, that may be; for I have seen you throw away more good humour in hopes of a *tendresse* from my Lord *Foppington*, who loves all women alike, than would have made my Lord *Morelove* perfectly happy, who loves only you.

L. Bet. The men of sense, my dear, make the best fools in the world: their sincerity and good breeding throws them so entirely into one's power, and gives one such an agreeable thirst of using them ill, to shew that power——'tis impossible not to quench it.

L. Easy. But methinks, my Lord *Morelove's* manner to you might move any woman to a kinder sense of his merit.

L. Bet. Ay! but would it not be hard, my dear, for a poor weak woman to have a man of his quality and reputation in her power, and not let the world see him there? Wou'd any creature sit new-dress'd all day in her closet? Cou'd you bear to have a sweet fancy'd suit, and never shew it at the play, or in the drawing-room?

L. Easy. But one wou'd not ride in't, methinks, or harraiss it out, when there's no occasion.

L. Bet. Pooh! my Lord *Morelove's* a mere *Indian* damask, one can't wear him out: o' my conscience I must give him to my woman at last, I begin to be known by him: had not I best leave him off, my dear? for (poor soul) I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

L. Easy. Now 'tis to me amazing, how a man of his spirit can bear to be us'd like a dog for four or five years together——but nothing's a wonder in love; yet pray, when you found you cou'd not like him at first, why did you ever encourage him?

L. Bet. Why, what wou'd you have one do? For my part, I cou'd no more choose a man by my eye, than a shoe; one must draw 'em on a little to see if they are right to one's foot.

L. Easy. But I'd no more fool on with a man I cou'd not like, than I'd wear a shoe that pinch'd me.

L. Bet. Ay, but then a poor wretch tells one he'll widen 'em, or do any thing, and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to turn such a trifle, as a pair of shoes or an heart, upon a fellow's-hands again.

L. Easy. Well! I confess you are very happily distinguish'd among most women of fortune, to have a man of my Lord *Morelove's* sense and quality so long and

honourably in love with you: for now-a-days one hardly ever hears of such a thing as a man of quality in love with the woman he wou'd marry: to be in love now, is only having a design upon a woman, a modish way of declaring war against her virtue, which they generally attack first, by toasting up her vanity.

L. Bet. Ay, but the world knows, that is not the case between my Lord and me.

L. Easy. Therefore I think you happy.

L. Bet. Now I don't see it. I'll swear I'm better pleas'd to know there are a great many foolish fellows of quality that take occasion to toast me frequently.

L. Easy. I vow I should not thank any gentleman for toasting me; and I have often wonder'd how a woman of your spirit cou'd bear a great many other freedoms I have seen some men take with you.

L. Bet. As how, my dear? Come, prithee be free with me, for you must know, I love dearly to hear my faults——Who is't you have observ'd to be too free with me?

L. Easy. Why, there's my Lord *Foppington*; cou'd any woman but you bear to see him with a respectful leer stare full in your face, draw up his breath and cry——Gad, you're handsome!

L. Bet. My dear, fine fruit will have flies about it, but, poor things, they do it no harm: for if you observe, people are generally most apt to chuse that the flies have been busy with; ha! ha!

L. Easy. Thou art a strange giddy creature!

L. Bet. That may be from so much circulation of thought, my dear.

L. Easy. But my Lord *Foppington*'s married, and one wou'd not fool with him for his Lady's sake; it may make her uneasy, and——

L. Bet. Poor creature! her pride indeed makes her carry it off without taking any notice of it to me; tho' I know she hates me in her heart, and I can't endure malicious people, so I us'd to dine with her once a week, purely to give her disorder; if you had but seen when my Lord and I fool'd a little, the creature look'd so ugly.

L. *Easy*. But I should not think my reputation safe; my Lord *Foppington*'s a man that talks often of his amours, but seldom speaks of favours that are refus'd him.

L. *Bet*. Pfhah; will any thing a man says make a woman less agreeable? Will his talking spoil one's complexion, or put one hair out of order?—And for reputation, look you, my dear, take it for a rule, that as amongst the lower rank of people no woman wants beauty that has fortune; so amongst people of fortune, no woman wants virtue that has beauty: but an estate and beauty join'd, are of an unlimited, nay, a power pontifical, make one not only absolute, but infallible—A fine woman's never in the wrong; if we were, 'tis not the strength of a poor creature's reason that can unfetter him———O! how I love to hear a wretch curse himself for loving on, or now and then coming out with a——

“ Yet for the plague of human race,

“ This devil has an angel's face.”

L. *Easy*. At this rate, I don't see you allow reputation to be at all essential to a fine woman.

L. *Bet*. Just as much as honour to a great man: power always is above scandal: don't you hear people say, the king of *France* owes most of his conquests to breaking his word? And wou'd not the *Confederates* have a fine time on't, if they were only to go to war with reproaches? Indeed, my dear, that jewel reputation is a very fanciful business; one shall not see an homely creature in town but wears it in her mouth, as monstrously as the *Indians* do bobs at their lips, and it really becomes them just alike.

L. *Easy*. Have a care, my dear, of trusting too far to power alone: for nothing is more ridiculous than the fall of pride; and a woman's pride at best may be suspected to be more a distrust, than a real contempt of mankind: for when we have said all we can, a deserving husband is certainly our best happiness: and I don't question but my Lord *Morelove*'s merit in a little time will make you think so too; for whatever airs you give yourself to the world, I'm sure your heart don't want good-nature.

L. *Bet.* You are mistaken, I am very ill-natur'd, tho' your good-humour won't let you see it.

L. *Easy.* Then to give me a proof on't, let me see you refuse to go immediately and dine with me, after I have promis'd Sir Charles to bring you.

L. *Bet.* Pray don't ask me.

L. *Easy.* Why?

L. *Bet.* Because to let you see I hate good-nature, I'll go without asking, that you mayn't have the malice to say I did you a favour.

L. *Easy.* Thou art a mad creature.

[*Ex. Arm in Arm.*]

The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's Lodgings.

Lord Morelove and Sir Charles at Piquet.

Sir *Char.* Come, my Lord, one single game for the *Tout*, and so have done.

L. *Mor.* No, hang 'em, I have enough of 'em; ill cards are the dullest company in the world—How much is it?

Sir *Char.* Three parties.

L. *Mor.* Fifteen pound—very well.

[*While L. Mor. counts out his money, a Servant gives Sir Charles a letter, which he reads to himself.*]

Sir *Char.* [*To the Servant*] Give my service, say I have company dines with me, if I have time I'll call there in the afternoon—Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit Serv.*]

L. *Mor.* What's the matter?—there——

[*Paying the money.*]

Sir *Char.* The old affair—my Lady *Graveairs*.

L. *Mor.* O! pr'ythee how does that go on?

Sir *Char.* As agreeable as a *Chancery* suit: for now 'tis come to the intolerable plague of my not being able to get rid on't; as you may see— [*Giving the Letter.*]

L. *Mor.* [*Reads*] "Your behaviour since I came to
" *Windfor*, has convinc'd me of your villainy with—

“out my being surpris’d, or angry at it: I desire
 “you would let me see you at my lodgings im-
 “mediately, where I shall have a better oppor-
 “tunity to convince you, that I never can, or po-
 “sitively will be as I have been. Yours, &c.”

A very whimsical letter!—Faith, I think she has had luck with you; if a man were oblig’d to have a mistress, her person and condition seem to be cut out for the ease of a lover: for she’s a young, handsome, wild, well-jointur’d widow——But what’s your quarrel?

Sir Char. Nothing—she sees the coolness happens to be first on my side, and her business with me now, I suppose, is to convince me, how heartily she’s vex’d that she was not beforehand with me.

L. Mor. Her pride and your indifference must occasion a pleasant scene, sure; what do you intend to do?

Sir Char. Treat her with a cool, familiar air, ’till I pique her to forbid me her sight; and then take her at her word.

L. Mor. Very gallant and provoking. [Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my Lord Foppington—— [Exit.

Sir Char. O——now, my Lord, if you have a mind to be let into the mystery of making love without pain—here’s one that’s a master of the art, and shall declaim to you——

Enter Lord Foppington.

My dear Lord Foppington!

L. Fop. My dear agreeable! *Que je t’embrasse! Pardi! Il y a cent ans que je ne veu——* My Lord, I am your Lordship’s most obedient humble servant.

L. Mor. My Lord, I kiss your hands——I hope we shall have you here some time; you seem to have laid in a stock of health to be in at the diversions of the place——You look extremely well.

L. Fop. To see one’s friends look so, my Lord, may easily give a *vermeil* to one’s complexion.

Sir Char. Lovers in hope, my Lord, always have a visible *brillant* in their eyes and air.

L. Fop. What dost thou mean, *Charles*?

Sir Char. Come, come, confess what really brought you to *Windsor*, now you have no business there?

L. Fop. Why two hours, and six of the best nags in Christendom, or the devil drive me.

L. Mor. You make haste, my Lord.

L. Fop. My Lord, I always fly when I pursue—— But they are well kept indeed——I love to have creatures go as I bid 'em; you have seen 'em, *Charles*, but so has all the world; *Foppington's* long-tails are known on every road in *England*.

Sir Char. Well, my Lord, but how came they to bring you this road? You don't use to take these irregular jaunts without some design in your head of having more than nothing to do.

L. Fop. Pshaw! Pox! pr'ythee, *Charles*, thou knowest I am a fellow of *sans consequence*, be where I will.

Sir Char. Nay, nay, this is too much among friends, my Lord; come, come,——we must have it, your real business here?

L. Fop. Why then, *entre nous*, there is a certain *fille de joye* about the Court here that loves winning at cards better than all the fine things I have been able to say to her,——so I have brought an odd thousand bill in my pocket that I design *tête-à-tête*, to play off with her at piquet, or so; and now the business is out.

Sir Char. Ah! and a very good business too, my Lord.

L. Fop. If it be well done, *Charles*!——

Sir Char. That's as you manage your cards, my Lord.

L. Mor. This must be a woman of consequence by the value you set upon her favours.

Sir Char. O! nothing's above the price of a fine woman.

L. Fop. Nay, look you, Gentlemen, the price may not happen to be altogether so high neither——For I fancy I know enough of the game, to make it an even bett I get her for nothing.

L. Mor. How so, my Lord?

L. Fop. Because, if she happen to lose a good sum to me, I shall buy her with her own money.

L. Mor. That's new, I confess.

L. Fop. You know, *Charles*, 'tis not impossible but I may be five hundred pounds deep with her—then bills may fall short, and the devil's in't if I want assurance to ask her to pay me some way or other.

Sir Char. And a man must be a churl indeed, that won't take a Lady's personal security; hah! hah! hah!

L. Fop. Heh! heh! heh! thou art a devil, *Charles*.

L. Mor. Death! how happy is this coxcomb! [*Aside*.

L. Fop. But to tell you the truth, Gentlemen,—I had another pressing temptation that brought me hither, which was—my wife.

L. Mor. That's kind indeed; my Lady has been here this month, she'll be glad to see you.

L. Fop. That I don't know; for I design this afternoon to send her to *London*.

L. Mor. What! the same day you come, my Lord? That would be cruel.

L. Fop. Ay, but it will be mighty convenient, for she is positively of no manner of use in my amours.

E. Mör. That's your fault, the Town thinks her a very deserving woman.

L. Fop. If she were a woman of the Town, perhaps I should think so too; but she happens to be my wife; and when a wife is given to deserve more than her husband's inclinations can pay, in my mind she has no merit at all.

L. Mor. She's extremely well-bred, and of a very prudent conduct.

L. Fop. Um—ay—the woman's proud enough.

L. Mor. Add to this, all the world allows her handsome.

L. Fop. The world's extremely civil, my Lord; and I should take it as a favour done me, if they could find an experiment to unmarry the poor woman from the only man in the world that can't think her handsome.

L. Mor. I believe there are a great many in the world that are sorry it is not in their power to unmarry her.

L. Fop. I am a great many in the world's very humble servant; and whenever they find 'tis in their power, their high and mighty wisdoms may command me at a quarter of an hour's warning.

L. Mor. Pray, my Lord, what did you marry for?

L. Fop. To pay my debts at play, and disinherit my younger brother.

L. Mor. But there are some things due to a wife?

L. Fop. And there are some debts I don't care to pay — to both which I plead Husband, and my Lord.

L. Mor. If I should do so, I shou'd expect to have my coach stopt in the street, and to meet my wife with the windows up in a hackney.

L. Fop. Then wou'd I put in bail, and order a separate maintenance.

L. Mor. And so pay double the sum of the debt, and be marry'd for nothing.

L. Fop. Now I think deferring a dun, and getting rid of one's wife, are two of the most agreeable sweets in the liberties of an *English* subject.

L. Mor. If I were marry'd, I wou'd as soon part from my estate, as my wife.

L. Fop. Now I wou'd not, sun-burn me if I would.

L. Mor. Death! But since you are thus indifferent, my Lord, why wou'd you needs marry a woman of so much merit? Cou'd not you have laid out your spleen upon some ill natur'd shrew, that wanted the plague of an ill husband, and have let her alone to some plain, honest man of quality that wou'd have deserv'd her.

L. Fop. Why faith, my Lord, that might have been consider'd; but I really grew so passionately fond of her fortune, that, curse catch me, I was quite blind to the rest of her good qualities: for to tell you the truth, if it had been possible that the old put of a Peer cou'd have toss'd me in t'other five thousand for 'em, by my consent, she should have relinquish'd her merit and virtues to any of her younger sisters.

Sir Char. Ay, ay, my Lord, virtues in a wife are good for nothing but to make her proud, and put the world in mind of her husband's faults.

L. Fop. Right, *Charles*: and strike me blind, but the women of virtue are now grown such idiots in love, they expect of a man, just as they do of a coach-horse, that

one's appetite, like t'other's flesh, should increase by feeding.

Sir *Char.* Right, my Lord, and don't consider, that *soujours chapons bouilles* will never do with an *English* stomach.

L. *Fop.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! To tell you the truth, *Charles*, I have known so much of that sort of eating that I now think, for an hearty meal, no wild fowl in *Europe* is comparable to a joint of *Banstead* mutton.

L. *Mor.* How do you mean ?

L. *Fop.* Why, that, for my part, I had rather have a plain slice of my wife's woman, than my guts full of e'er an *Ortolan* Dutcheffs in *Christendom*.

L. *Mor.* But I thought, my Lord, your chief business now at *Windsor* had been your design upon a woman of quality

L. *Fop.* That's true, my Lord ; tho' I don't think your fine Lady the best dish myself, yet a man of quality can't be without such things at his table.

L. *Mor.* O ! then you only desire the reputation of an affair with her.

L. *Fop.* I think the reputation is the most inviting part of an amour with most women of quality.

L. *Mor.* Why so, my Lord ?

L. *Fop.* Why, who the devil would run through all the degrees of form and ceremony, that lead one up to the last savour, if it were not for the reputation of understanding the nearest way to get over the difficulty ?

L. *Mor.* But, my Lord, does not the reputation of your being so general an undertaker frighten the women from engaging with you ? for they say, no man can love but one at a time.

L. *Fop.* That's just one more than ever I came up to : for, stop my breath, if ever I lov'd one in my life.

L. *Mor.* How do you get 'em then ?

L. *Fop.* Why, sometimes as they get other people : I dress, and let them get me ; or, if that won't do, as I got my title, buy 'em.

L. *Mor.* But how can you, that profess indifference, think it worth your while to come so often up to the price of a woman of quality ?

L. Fop. Because you must know, my Lord, that most of them begin now to come down to reason; I mean those that are to be had, for some die fools; but with the wiser sort, 'tis not of late so very expensive; now and then a *partie quarrie*, a jaunt or two in a hack to an *Indian* house, a little *china*, an odd thing for a gown, or so, and in three days after you meet her at the convenience of trying it *chez Mademoiselle D' Epingle*.

Sir Char. Ay, ay, my Lord, and when you are there, you know, what between a little chat, a dish of tea, *Mademoiselle's* good humour, and a *petit chanson*, or two, the devil's in't if a man can't fool away the time, 'till he sees how it looks upon her by candle-light.

L. Fop. Heh! heh! well said, *Charles*; I'gad I fancy thee and I have unlac'd many a reputation there.—Your great Lady is as soon undress'd as her woman.

L. Mor. I could never find it so—the shame or scandal of a repulse always made me afraid of attempting a woman of condition.

Sir Char. Ha! ha! I'gad, my Lord, you deserve to be ill us'd, your modesty's enough to spoil any woman in the world; but my Lord and I understand the sex a little better; we see plainly that women are only cold, as some men are brave, from the modesty or fear of those that attack 'em.

L. Fop. Right, *Charles*—a man should no more give up his heart to a woman, than his sword to a bully; they are both as insolent as the devil after it.

Sir Char. How do you like that, my Lord?

[*Aside to L. Mor.*]

L. Mor. Faith, I envy him—But, my Lord, suppose your inclination should stumble upon a woman truly virtuous, would not a severe repulse from such an one put you strangely out of countenance?

L. Fop. Not at all, my Lord—for if a man don't mind a box of the ear in a fair struggle with a fresh country-girl, why the duce should he be concern'd at an impertinent frown from an attack upon a woman of quality?

L. Mor. Then you have no notion of a Lady's cruelty?

L. Fop. Ha! ha! let me blood, if I think there's a greater jest in nature. I am ready to crack my guts with laughing to see a senseless flirt, because the creature happens to have a little pride that she calls virtue about her, give herself all the insolent airs of resentment and disdain to an honest fellow, that all the while does not care three pinches of snuff if she and her virtue were to run with their last favours through the first regiment of Guards——Ha! ha!——it puts me in mind of an affair of mine, so impertinent——

L. Mor. O! that's impossible, my Lord,——pray let's hear it.

L. Fop. Why I happen'd once to be very well in a certain man of quality's family, and his wife lik'd me.

L. Mor. How do you know she lik'd you?

L. Fop. Why from the very moment I told her I lik'd her, she never durst trust herself at the end of a room with me.

L. Mor. That might be her not liking you.

L. Fop. My Lord——Women of quality don't use to speak the thing plain——But to satisfy you I did not want encouragement, I never came there in my life, but she did immediately smile, and borrow my snuff-box.

L. Mor. She lik'd your snuff at least——Well, but how did she use you?

L. Fop. By all that's infamous, she jilted me.

L. Mor. How! Jilt you?

L. Fop. Ay, death's curse, she jilted me.

L. Mor. Pray let's hear.

L. Fop. For when I was pretty well convinc'd she had a mind to me, I one day made her a hint of an appointment: upon which, with an insolent frown in her face (that made her look as ugly as the devil) she told me, that if ever I came thither again, her Lord should know that she had forbidden me the house before:——Did you ever hear of such a slut?

Sir Char. Intolerable!

L. Mor. But how did her answer agree with you?

L. Fop. O, passionately well! for I star'd full in her face, and burst out a-laughing; at which she turn'd upon

her heel, and gave a crack with her fan like a coach-whip, and bridled out of the room with the air and complexion of an incens'd turkey-cock.

[A Servant whispers Sir Charles.

L. Mor. What did you then?

L. Fop. I——look'd after, gap'd, threw up the sash, and fell a fingering out of the window——So that you see, my Lord, while a man is not in love, there's no great affliction in missing one's way to a woman.

Sir Char. Ay, ay, you talk this very well, my Lord; but now let's see how you dare behave yourself upon action——Dinner's serv'd, and the Ladies stay for us——There's one within has been too hard for as brisk a man as yourself.

L. Mor. I guess who you mean——Have a care, my Lord, she'll prove your courage for you.

L. Fop. Will she! then she's an undone creature. For let me tell you, Gentlemen, courage is the whole mystery of making love, and of more use than conduct is in war; for the bravest fellow in Europe may beat his brains out against the stubborn walls of a town——
but

——*Women born to be controul'd,
Stoop to the forward and the bold.*

[Exeunt.



A C T. III.

The SCENE continues.

Enter Lord Morelove and Sir Charles.

L. Mor. SO! did not I bear up bravely?

Sir Char. Admirably! With the best-bred insolence in nature, you insulted like a woman of quality when her country-bred husband's jealous of her in the wrong place.

L. Mor. Ha! ha! Did you observe, when I first came into the room, how carelessly she brush'd her eyes over me, and when the company saluted me, stood all the while with her face to the window? Ha! ha!

Sir Char. What astonish'd airs she gave herself, when you ask'd her, what made her so grave upon her old friends?

L. Mor. And whenever I offer'd any thing in talk, what affected care she took to direct her observations of it to a third person?

Sir Char. I observ'd she did not eat above the rump of a pigeon all dinner-time.

L. Mor. And how she colour'd, when I told her, her Ladyship had lost her stomach?

Sir Char. If you keep your temper, she's undone.

L. Mor. Provided she sticks to her pride, I believe I may.

Sir Char. Ah! never fear her; I warrant, in the humour she is in, she would as soon part with her sense of feeling.

L. Mor. Well! what's to be done next?

Sir Char. Only observe her motions; for by her behaviour at dinner, I am sure she designs to gall you with my Lord Foppington: if so, you must stand her fire, and then play my Lady Graveairs upon her, whom I'll immediately pique and prepare for your purpose.

L. Mor. I understand you—the properest woman in the world too, for she'll certainly encourage the least offer from me, in hopes of revenging her slights upon you.

Sir Char. Right; and the very encouragement she gives you, at the same time will give me a pretence to widen the breach of my quarrel to her.

L. Mor. Besides, Charles, I own I am fond of any attempt that will forward a misunderstanding there, for your Lady's sake: a woman so truly good in her nature, ought to have something more from a man, than bare occasions to prove her goodness.

Sir Char. Why then, upon honour, my Lord, to give you proof that I am positively the best husband in the world, my wife———never yet found me out.

L. Mor. That may be her being the best wife in the world ; she, may be, won't find you out.

Sir Char. Nay, if she won't tell a man of his faults when she sees 'em, how the duce should he mend 'em ? But however, you see I am going to leave 'em off as fast as I can.

L. Mor. Being tir'd of a woman is indeed a pretty tolerable assurance of a man's not designing to fool on with her——Here she comes, and if I don't mistake, brimful of reproaches——You can't take her in a better time——I'll leave you.

Enter Lady Graveairs.

Your Ladyship's most humble servant ! Is the company broke up, pray ?

L. Grav. No, my Lord, they are just talking of Basset ; my Lord *Foppington* has a mind to tally, if your Lordship would encourage the table.

L. Mor. O madam, with all my heart ! But *Sir Charles*, I know, is hard to be got to it ; I'll leave your Ladyship to prevail with him. *[Exit L. Morelove.]*

[Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs salute coldly, and trifle some time before they speak.]

L. Grav. *Sir Charles*, I sent you a note this morning.

Sir Char. Yes, madam ; but there were some passages I did not expect from your Ladyship ; you seem'd to tax me with things that——

L. Grav. Look you, Sir, 'tis not at all material, whether I tax'd you with any thing or no : I don't in the least desire to hear you clear yourself ; upon my word, you may be very easy as to that matter ; for my part, I am mighty well satisfy'd things are as they are ; all I have to say to you is, that you need not give yourself the trouble to call at my lodgings this afternoon, if you should have time, as you were pleas'd to send me word,——and so your servant, Sir, that's all—— *[Going.]*

Sir *Char.* Hold, madam.

L. *Grav.* Look you, Sir *Charles*, 'tis not your calling me back, that will signify any thing, I can assure you.

Sir *Char.* Why this extraordinary haste, madam?

L. *Grav.* In short, Sir *Charles*, I have taken a great many things from you of late, that you know I have often told you I would positively bear no longer:—— But I see things are in vain, and the more people strive to oblige people, the less they are thank'd for't: and since there must be an end of one's ridiculousness one time or other, I don't see any time so proper as the present, and therefore, Sir, I desire you'd think of things accordingly——Your servant——

[*Going, he holds her.*]

Sir *Char.* Nay, madam, let's start fair, however; you ought at least to stay 'till I'm as ready as your Ladyship; and then——if we must part——

Affectedly. { Adieu, ye silent grots, and shady groves;
Ye soft amusements of our growing loves;
Adieu, ye whisper'd sighs that fann'd the fire,
And all the thrilling joys of young desire.

L. *Grav.* O mighty well, sir! I am very glad we are at last come to a right understanding, the only way I have long wish'd for; not but I'd have you to know, I see your design through all your painted ease of resignation: I know you'd give your soul to make me uneasy now.

Sir *Char.* O fy, madam! upon my word, I would not make you uneasy, if it were in my power.

L. *Grav.* O dear Sir, you need not take such care, upon my word; you'll find I can part with you without the least disorder——I'll try at least, and so once more, and for ever, Sir, your servant: not but you must give me leave to tell you, as my last thought of you too, that I do think——you are a villain——

[*Exit hastily.*]

Sir *Char.* O your very humble servant, madam——

[*Bowing low.*]

What a charming quality is a woman's pride, that's strong enough to refuse a man her favours, when he's weary of 'em—Ah!

[*Lady Graveairs returns.*]

L. Grav. Look you, Sir *Charles*——don't presume upon the easiness of my temper; for to convince you that I am positively in earnest in this matter, I desire you would let me have what letters you have had of mine, since you came to *Windsor*, and I expect you'll return the rest, as I will yours, as soon as we come to *London*.

Sir Char. Upon my faith, madam, I never kept any; I always put snuff in 'em, and so they wear out.

L. Grav. Sir *Charles*, I must have 'em, for positively I won't stir without 'em.

Sir Char. Ha! then I must be civil, I see. [*Aside.* Perhaps, madam, I have no mind to part with 'em——or you.

L. Grav. Look you, sir, all those sort of things are in vain, now there's an end of every thing between us——If you say you won't give 'em, I must e'en get 'em as well as I can.

Sir Char. Hah! that won't do then, I find. [*Aside.*

L. Grav. Who's there? Mrs. *Edging*——Your keeping a letter, sir, won't keep me, I'll assure you.

Enter Edging.

Edg. Did your Ladyship call me, madam?

L. Grav. Ay, child, pray do me the favour to fetch my scarf out of the dining-room.

Edg. Yes, madam——

Sir Char. O! then there's hopes again. [*Aside.*

Edg. Ha! she looks as if my master had quarrell'd with her; I hope she's gone away in a huff——she shan't stay for her scarf, I warrant her——This is pure.

[*Aside. Exit smiling.*

L. Grav. Pray, Sir *Charles*, before I go, give me leave now, after all, to ask you——why you have us'd me thus?

Sir Char. What is it you call usage, madam?

L. Grav. Why then, since you will have it, how comes it you have been so grossly careless and neglectful of me of late? Only tell me seriously wherein I have deserv'd this.

Sir Char. Why then, seriously, madam——

Re-enter Edging with a scarf.

We are interrupted ———

Edg. Here's your Ladyship's scarf, madam.

L. Grav. Thank you, Mrs. *Edging*.—O la! pray will you let somebody get me a chair to the door.

Edg. Hum! she might have told me that before, if she had been in such haste to go——— [*Exit.*

L. Grav. Now, sir.

Sir Char. Then seriously, I say, I am of late grown so very lazy in my pleasures; that I had rather lose a woman than go through the plague and trouble of having or keeping her; and to be free, I have found so much even in my acquaintance with you, whom I confess to be a mistress in the art of pleasing, that I am from henceforth resolv'd to follow no pleasure that rises above the degree of amusement——and that woman that expects I should make her my business, why——like my business——is then in a fair way of being forgot:—When once she comes to reproach me with vows, and usage, and stuff——I had as lief hear her talk of bills, bonds, and ejectments; her passion becomes as troublesome as a law-suit, and I would as soon converse with my Solicitor——In short, I shall never care six-pence for any woman that won't be obedient.——

L. Grav. I'll swear, sir, you have a very free way of treating people; I am glad I am so well acquainted with your principles, however———and you'd have me obedient?

Sir Char. Why not? My wife's so, and I think she has as much pretence to be proud as your Ladyship.

L. Grav. Lard! is there no chair to be had, I wonder?

Enter Edging.

Edg. Here's a chair, madam.

L. Grav. 'Tis very well, Mrs. *Edging*: pray, will you let somebody get me a glass of fair water.

Edg. Hum! her huff's almost over, I suppose—I see he's a villain still. [*Exit.*]

L. Grav. Well! that was the prettiest fancy about obedience, sure, that ever was! Certainly a woman of condition must be infinitely happy under the dominion of so generous a lover! But how came you to forget kicking and whipping all this while? Methinks you ~~should~~ not have left so fashionable an article out of your scheme of government.

Sir Char. Um! No, there is too much trouble in that; though I have known 'em of admirable use in the reformation of some humourfome gentlewomen.

L. Grav. But one thing more, and I have done—— Pray what degree of spirit must the Lady have, that is to make herself happy under so much freedom, order and tranquillity?

Sir Char. O! she must at least have as much spirit as your Ladyship, or she'd give me no pleasure in breaking it.

L. Grav. No; that wou'd be troublesome—— You had better take one that's broken to your hand,—— there are such souls to be hir'd, I believe; Things that will rub your temples in an evening 'till you fall fast asleep in their laps; Creatures too that think their wages their reward: I fancy, at last, that will be the best method for the lazy passion of a marry'd man, that has outliv'd his any other sense of gratification.

Sir Char. Lock you, madam,——I have lov'd you very well a great while; now you wou'd have me love you better and longer, which is not in my power to do; and I don't think there's a plague upon earth like a dun that comes for more money than one's ever likely to be able to pay.

L. Grav. A dun! do you take me for a dun, sir? do I come a dunning to you? [*Walks in a beat.*]

Sir Char. Hift! don't expose yourself——here's company——

L. Grav. I care not——A dun! You shall see, sir, I can revenge an affront, tho' I despise the wretch that offers it——A dun! Oh! I cou'd die with laughing at the fancy. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Char.* So! she's in admirable order—Here comes my Lord, and I'm afraid in the very nick of his occasion for her.

Enter Lord Morelove.

L. *Mor.* O *Charles!* Undone again! all's lost and ruin'd.

Sir *Char.* What's the matter now?

L. *Mor.* I have been playing the fool yonder even to contempt; my senseless jealousy has confess'd a weakness I never shall forgive myself——She has insulted on it to that degree too——I can't bear the thought——O *Charles!* this devil still is mistress of my heart, and I cou'd dash my brains to think how grossly too I have let her know it.

Sir *Char.* Ah! how it would tickle her if she saw you in this condition: Ha! ha! ha!

L. *Mor.* Pr'ythee don't torture me: think of some present ease, or I shall burst——

Sir *Char.* Well, well, let's hear, pray——what has she done to you? Ha! ha!

L. *Mor.* Why, ever since I left you, she treated me with so much coolness and ill-nature, and that Thing of a Lord with so much laughing ease, such an acquainted, such a spiteful familiarity, that at the last she saw and triumph'd in my uneasiness.

Sir *Char.* Well! and so you left the room in a pet? ha!

L. *Mor.* O worse, worse still! for at last, with half shame and anger in my looks, I thrust myself between my Lord and her, press'd her by the hand, and in a whisper trembling, begg'd her in pity of herself and me to shew her good-humour only where she knew it was truly valu'd; at which she broke from me with a cold smile, sat her down by the Peer, whisper'd him, and burst into a loud laughter in my face.

Sir *Char.* Ha! ha! then would I have given fifty pound to have seen your face: why, what, in the name of common sense, had you to do with humility? Will you never have enough on't? Death! 'twas setting a lighted match to gunpowder to blow yourself up.

L. Mor. I see my folly now, *Charles*—but what shall I do with the remains of life that she has left me?

Sir Char. O, throw it at her feet by all means, put on your Tragedy-face, catch fast hold of her petticoat, whip out your handkerchief, and in point blank verse desire her one way or other to make an end of the business.

[In a whining tone.

L. Mor. What a fool dost thou make me?

Sir Char. I only shew you, as you come out of her hands, my Lord.

L. Mor. How contemptibly have I behav'd myself?

Sir Char. That's according as you bear her behaviour.

L. Mor. Bear it! no: I thank you, *Charles*—thou hast wak'd me now; and if I bear it—What have you done with my Lady *Graveairs*?

Sir Char. Your business, I believe—She's ready for you, she's just gone down stairs, and if you don't make haste after her, I expect her back again with a knife or a pistol, presently.

L. Mor. I'll go this minute.

Sir Char. No, stay a little, here comes my Lord. We'll see what we can get out of him first.

L. Mor. Methinks I now could laugh at her.

Enter Lord Foppington.

L. Fop. Nay, pr'ythee, Sir *Charles*, let's have a little of thee—We have been so *chagrin* without thee, that, stop my breath, the ladies are gone half asleep to church for want of thy company.

Sir Char. That's hard indeed, while your Lordship was among 'em: is Lady *Betty* gone too?

L. Fop. She was just upon the wing—But I caught her by the snuff-box, and she pretends to stay to see if I'll give it her again, or no.

L. Mor. Death! 'tis that I gave her, and the only present she ever would receive from me—Ask him how he came by it.

[Aside to Sir Charles.

Sir Char. Pr'ythee don't be uneasy—Did she give it you, my Lord?

L. Fop. Faith, *Charles*, I can't say she did, or she did not, but we were playing the fool, and I took it—*à la* ———Pshah! I can't tell thee in *French* neither, but *Horace* touches it to a nicety——'twas *pignus direptum malè pertinaci*.

L. Mor. So! but I must bear it——If your Lordship has a mind to the box, I'll stand by you in the keeping of it.

L. Fop. My Lord, I am passionately oblig'd to you, but I am afraid I cannot answer your hazarding so much of the Lady's favour.

L. Mor. Not at all, my Lord: 'tis possible I may not have the same regard to her frown that your Lordship has.

L. Fop. That's a bite, I am sure——he'd give a joint of his little finger to be as well with her as I am. [*Aside.*] But here she comes! *Charles*, stand by me—Must not a man be a vain coxcomb now, to think this creature follow'd one?

Sir Char. Nothing so plain, my Lord.

L. Fop. Flattering devil!

Enter Lady Betty.

L. Bet. Pshah! my Lord *Foppington*! Pr'ythee don't play the fool now, but give me my snuff-box——Sir *Charles*, help me to take it from him.

Sir Char. You know I hate trouble, madam.

L. Bet. Pooh! You'll make me stay 'till prayers are half over now.

L. Fop. If you'll promise me not to go to church, I'll give it you.

L. Bet. I'll promise nothing at all, for positively I will have it. [*Struggling with him.*]

L. Fop. Then comparatively I won't part with it, ha! ha! [*Struggles with her.*]

L. Bet. O you devil! you have kill'd my arm! Oh! Well—if you'll let me have it, I'll give you a better.

L. Mor. O *Charles*! that has a view of distant kindness in it. [*Aside to Sir Charles.*]

L. Fop. Nay, now I keep it superlatively — I find there's a secret value in it.

L. Bet. O dismal! upon my word, I am only ashamed to give it you: do you think I would offer such an odious fancy'd thing to any body I had the least value for?

Sir Char. Now it comes a little nearer, methinks it does not seem to be any kindness at all.

[Aside to Lord Morelove.]

L. Fop. Why, really, madam, upon second view, it has not extremely the mode of a Lady's utensil: are you sure it never held any thing but snuff!

L. Bet. O! you monster!

L. Fop. Nay, I only ask, because it seems to me to have very much the air and fancy of Monsieur Smoak-and-fo's tobacco-box.

L. Mor. I can bear no more.

Sir Char. Why, don't then; I'll step into the company, and return to your relief immediately. *[Exit.]*

L. Mor. *[To L. Bet.]* Come, madam, will your Ladyship give me leave to end the difference? — Since the slightness of the thing may let you bestow it without any mark of favour, shall I beg it of your Ladyship?

L. Bet. O my Lord, nobody sooner — I beg you will give it my Lord.

[Looking earnestly on L. Fop. who smiling gives it to L. Mor. and then bows gravely to her.]

L. Mor. Only to have the honour of restoring it to your Lordship; and if there be any other trifle of mine, your Lordship has a fancy to, tho' it were a mistress, I don't know any person in the world who has so good a claim to my resignation.

L. Fop. O my Lord, this generosity will distract me.

L. Mor. My Lord, I do you but common justice: but from your conversation, I had never known the true value of the sex. You positively understand 'em the best of any man breathing, therefore I think every one of common prudence ought to resign to you.

L. Fop. Then positively your Lordship's the most

obliging person in the world, for I'm sure your judgment can never like any woman that is not the finest creature in the universe.

[*Bowing to L. Betty.*]

L. Mor. O! your Lordship does me too much honour; I have the worst judgment in the world; no man has been more deceiv'd in it.

L. Fop. Then your Lordship, I presume, has been apt to chuse in a mask, or by candle light.

L. Mor. In a mask, indeed, my Lord, and of all masks the most dangerous.

L. Fop. Pray what's that, my Lord?

L. Mor. A bare face.

L. Fop. Your Lordship will pardon me, if I don't so readily comprehend how a woman's bare face can hide her face.

L. Mor. It often hides her heart, my Lord, and therefore I think it sometimes a more dangerous mask than a piece of velvet: that's rather a mark than a disguise of an ill woman; but the mischiefs skulking behind a beauteous form, give no warning; they are always sure, fatal, and innumerable.

L. Bet. O barbarous aspersions! My Lord *Foppington*, have you nothing to say for the poor women?

L. Fop. I must confess, madam, nothing of this nature ever happen'd in my course of amours: I always judge the beauteous form of a woman to be the most agreeable part of her composition, and when once a Lady does me the honour to toss that into my arms, I think myself obliged in good-nature, not to quarrel about the rest of her equipage.

L. Bet. Why ay, my Lord, there's some good-humour in that now.

L. Mor. He's happy in a plain, *English* stomach, madam. I could recommend a dish that's perfectly to your Lordship's gust, where beauty is the only sauce to it.

L. Bet. So!

L. Fop. My Lord, when my wine's right, I never care it should be zested.

L. Mor. I know some ladies would thank you for that opinion.

L. Bet. My Lord *Morelove's* really grown such a churl to the women, I don't only think he is not, but can't conceive how he ever could be in love.

L. Mor. Upon my word, madam, I once thought I was. [Smiling.]

L. Bet. Fy! fy! how could you think so? I fancy now you had only a mind to domineer over some poor creature, and so you thought you were in love; ha! ha!

L. Mor. The Lady I lov'd, madam, grew so unfortunate in her conduct, that she at last brought me to treat her with the same indifference and civility as I now pay your Ladyship.

L. Bet. And ten to one, just at that time she never thought you such tolerable company.

L. Mor. That I can't say, madam; for at that time she grew so affected, there was no judging of her thoughts at all. [Mimicking her.]

L. Bet. What, and so you left the poor lady! O you inconstant creature!

L. Mor. No, madam, to have lov'd her on had been inconstancy; for she was never two hours together the same woman. [L. Bet. and L. Mor. seem to talk.]

L. Fop. [*Aside.*] Ha! ha! ha! I see he has a mind to abuse her; so I'll e'en give him an opportunity of doing his business with her at once for ever—My Lord, I perceive your Lordship's going to be good company to the lady, and for her sake I don't think it good manners in me to disturb you——

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Char. My Lord *Foppington*?

L. Fop. O *Charles*! I was just wanting thee—Hark thee—I have three thousand secrets for thee—I have made such discoveries! To tell thee all in one word—*Morelove's* as jealous of me as the devil; heh! heh! heh!

Sir Char. Is't possible? has she given him any occasion?

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L. Fop. Only rally'd him to death upon my account; she told me within, just now, she'd use him like a dog, and begg'd me to draw off for an opportunity.

Sir Char. O! keep in while the scent lies, and she's your own, my Lord.

L. Fop. I can't tell that, *Charles*, but I'm sure she's fairly unharbour'd, and when once I throw off my inclinations, I usually follow 'em 'till the game has enough on't; and between thee and I she's pretty well blown too, she can't stand long, I believe; for, curle catch me, if I have not rid down half a thousand pound after her already.

Sir Char. What do you mean?

L. Fop. I have lost five hundred to her at piquet since dinner.

Sir Char. You are a fortunate man, faith; you are resolv'd not to be thrown out, is't see.

L. Fop. Hang it! What should a man come out for, if he does not keep up the sport?

Sir Char. Well push'd, my Lord.

L. Fop. *Tayo!* have at her——

Sir Char. Down! down! my Lord——ah——ware hanches.

L. Fop. Ah! *Charles*, [*Embracing him*] Pr'ythee let's observe a little; there's a foolish cur, now I have run her to a stand, has a mind to be at her by himself, and thou shalt see she won't stir out of her way for him.

[*They stand aside.*]

L. Mor. Ha! ha! Your Ladyship's very grave of a sudden; you look as if your lover had insolently recover'd his common senses.

L. Bet. And your Lordship is so very gay, and unlike yourself, one wou'd swear you were just come from the pleasure of making your mistress afraid of you.

L. Mor. No, faith, quite contrary—for, do you know, madam, I have just found out, that upon your account I have made myself one of the most ridiculous puppies upon the face of the earth——I have, upon my faith!——nay, and so extravagantly such——ha! ha! that it's at last become a jest even to myself;

and I can't help laughing at it for the soul of me; ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. I want to cure him of that laugh now. [*Aside.* My Lord, since you are so generous, I'll tell you another secret: do you know too, that I still find (spite of all your great wisdom, and my contemptible qualities, as you are pleas'd now and then to call them), do you know, I say, that I see under all this, you still love me with the same helpless passion; and can your vast foresight imagine I won't use you accordingly, for these extraordinary airs you are pleas'd to give yourself?

L. Mor. O by all means, madam, 'tis fit you should, and I expect it, whenever it is in your power—Confusion!

[*Aside.*

L. Bet. My Lord, you have talk'd to me this half hour, without confessing pain. [*Pauses and affects to gape.*] Only remember it.

L. Mor. Hell and tortures!

L. Bet. What did you say, my Lord?

L. Mor. Fire and furies!

L. Bet. Ha! ha! he's disorder'd—Now I am ready—My Lord Foppington, have you a mind to your revenge at piquet?

L. Fop. I have always a mind to an opportunity of entertaining your Ladyship, madam.

[L. Bet. *coquetts with* L. Fop.

L. Mor. O Charles—the insolence of this woman might furnish out a thousand devils.

Sir Char. And your temper is enough to furnish out a thousand such women—Come away—I have business for you upon the terrace.

L. Mor. Let me but speak one word to her.

Sir Char. Not a syllable—the tongue's a weapon you'll always have the worst at: for I see you have no guard, and she carries a devilish edge.

L. Bet. My Lord, don't let any thing I've said frighten you away; for if you have the least inclination to stay and rail, you know the old conditions; 'tis but your asking my pardon next day, and you may give your passion any liberty you think fit.

L. Mor. Daggers and death!

Sir Char. Are you mad?

L. Mor. Let me speak to her now, or I shall burst—

Sir Char. Upon condition you'll speak no more of her to me, my Lord, do as you please.

L. Mor. Pr'ythee pardon me—I know not what to do.

Sir Char. Come along—I'll set you to work—I warrant you—Nay, nay, none of your parting ogles—Will you go?

L. Mor. Yes—and I hope for ever—

[Exit Sir Char. pulling away L. Mor.]

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha! Did ever mortal monster set up for a lover with such unfortunate qualifications?

L. Bet. Indeed, my Lord Morelous has something strangely singular in his manner.

L. Fop. I thought I should have burst to see the creature pretend to rally, and give himself the airs of one of us—But, run me through, madam, your Ladyship push'd like a fencing-master; the last thrust was a coup de grace, I believe—I'm afraid his Honour will hardly meet your Ladyship in haste again.

L. Bet. Not unless his second, Sir Charles, keeps him better in practice, perhaps—Well, the humour of this creature has done me signal service to-day; I must keep it up for fear of a second engagement. [Aside.]

L. Fop. Never was poor wit so foil'd at his own weapon sure.

L. Bet. Wit? Had he ever any pretence to it?

L. Fop. Ha! ha! he has not much in love, I think, though he wears the reputation of a very pretty young fellow among some sort of people; but, strike me, stupid, if ever I could discover common sense in all the progress of his amours: he expects a woman should like him for endeavouring to convince her, that she has not one good quality belonging to the whole composition of her soul and body.

L. Bet. That, I suppose, is only in a modest hope, that she'll mend her faults, to qualify herself for his vast merit, ha! ha!

L. Fop. Poor Morelous! I see she can't endure him.

[Aside.]

L. Bet. Or if one really had all those faults, he does not consider, that sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; no body takes it now.

L. Pop. O! no mortal, madam, unless it be here and there a squire, that's making his lawful court to the cherry-check charms of my Lord Bishop's great fat daughter in the country.

L. Bet. O! What a surfeiting couple has he put together! ——— [*Throwing her hand carelessly upon his.*]

L. Pop. Fond of me, by all that's tender! — Poor Fool, I'll give thee ease immediately. [*Aside.*] — But, madam, you were pleas'd just now to offer me my revenge at piquet. — Now here's no body within, and I think we can't make use of a better opportunity.

L. Bet. O! no: not now, my Lord! ——— I have a favour I would fain beg of you first.

L. Pop. But time, madam, is very precious in this place, and I shall not easily forgive myself if I don't take him by the forelock.

L. Bet. But I have a great mind to have a little more sport with my Lord Morelove first, and would fain beg your assistance.

L. Pop. O! with all my heart; and, upon second thoughts, I don't know but piquing a rival in public may be as good sport, as being well with a mistress in private: for, after all, the pleasure of a fine woman is like that of her virtue, not so much in the thing, as the reputation of having it. [*Aside.*] — Well, madam, but how can I serve you in this affair?

L. Bet. Why, methought, as my Lord Morelove went out, he shew'd a stern resentment in his look, that seem'd to threaten me with rebellion, and downright defiance: now I have a great fancy, that you and I should follow him to the terrace, and laugh at his resolution before he has time to put it in practice.

L. Pop. And so punish his fault before he commits it! Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. Nay, we won't give him time, if his courage should fail, to repent it.

L. *Fop*. Ha! ha! ha! let me bleed; I'll don't long to be at it, ha! ha!

L. *Bet*. O! 'twill be such diversion to see him bite his lips, and broil within, only with seeing us ready to split our sides in laughing at nothing, ha! ha!

L. *Fop*. Ha! ha! I see the creature does really like me. [*Aside.*] And, then, madam, to hear him hum a broken piece of a tune, in affectation of his not minding us—'twill be so foolish, when we know he 'loves' us to death all the while, ha! ha!

L. *Bet*. And if at last his sage mouth should open in furly contradiction of our humour, then will we, in pure opposition to his, immediately fall foul upon every thing that is not gallant and fashionable; constancy shall be the mark of age and ugliness, virtue a jest; we'll rally discretion out of doors, lay gravity at our feet, and only love, free love, disorder, liberty, and pleasure, be our standing principles.

L. *Fop*. Madam, you transport me: for if ever I was oblig'd to nature for any one tolerable qualification, 'twas positively the talent of being exuberantly pleasant upon this subject—I am impatient—my fancy's upon the wing already—let's fly to him!

L. *Bet*. No, no! stay till I am just got out, our going together won't be so proper.

L. *Fop*. As your Ladyship pleases, madam—But when this affair is over, you won't forget that I have a certain revenge due.

L. *Bet*. Ay! ay! after supper I am for you—Nay, you shan't stir a step, my Lord—

[*Seeing her to the door.*]

L. *Fop*. Only to tell you, you have fix'd me yours to the last existence of my soul's eternal entity—

L. *Bet*. O, your servant.

[*Exit.*]

L. *Fop*. Ha! ha! stark mad for me, by all that's handsome! Poor *Morelove*! That a fellow who has ever been abroad, should think a woman of her spirit is to be taken as the Confederates do towns, by a regular siege, when so many of the *French* successes might have shewn him the surest way is to whisper the governor.—How can a coxcomb give himself the fatigue of bom-

harding a woman's understanding, when he may with so much ease make a friend of her constitution!—
 I'll see, if I can shew him a little *French* play with Lady Betty.—Let me see.—Ay, I'll make an end of it the old way—get her into piquet at her own lodging, not mind one tittle of my play, give her every game before she's half up, that she may judge the strength of my inclination by my haste of losing up to her price; then of a sudden, with a familiar leer, cry—Rat piquet—sweep counters, cards and money all upon the floor, & done—
L'affaire est faite. [Exit.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Castle Terrace.*

Enter Lady Betty, and Lady Easy.

L. Easy. MY Dear, you really talk to me as if I were your lover, and not your friend; or else I am so dull, that by all you've said I can't make the least guess at your real thoughts.—Can you be serious for a moment?

L. Bet. Not easily: but I would do more to oblige

L. Easy. Then pray deal ingenuously, and tell me, without reserve, are you sure you don't love my Lord Margrave?

L. Bet. Then seriously—I think not.—But because I won't be positive, you shall judge by the worst of my symptoms.—First, I own I like his conversation, his person has neither fault nor beauty—well enough—I don't remember I ever secretly wish'd myself married to him, or—that I ever seriously resolv'd against it.

L. Easy. Well, so far you are tolerably safe:—

But come—as to his manner of addressing you, what effect has that had?

L. Bet. I am not a little pleas'd to observe few men follow a woman with the same fatigue and spirit that he does me—am more pleas'd when he lets me use him ill; and if ever I have a favourable thought of him 'tis when I see he can't bear that usage.

L. Easy. Have a care, that last is a dangerous symptom—he pleases your pride, I find.

L. Bet. Oh! perfectly: in that—I own no mortal ever can come up to him.

L. Easy. But now, my dear! now comes the main point—Jealousy! Are you sure you have never been touch'd with it? Tell me that with a false conscience, and then I pronounce you clear.

L. Bet. Nay, then I defy him; for positively I was never jealous in my life.

L. Easy. How, madam! Have you never been stirr'd enough, to think a woman strangely forward for being a little familiar in talk with him? Or are you sure his gallantry to another never gave you the least disorder? Were you never, upon no accident, in an apprehension of losing him?

L. Bet. Ha! Why, madam—Bless me!—why—why—why, sure you don't call this jealousy, my dear?

L. Easy. Nay, nay, that is not the business—Have you ever felt any thing of this nature, madam?

L. Bet. Lord! don't be so hasty, my dear—any thing of this nature—O Lud! I swear I don't like it: dear creature, bring me off here; for I am half frighted out of my wits.

L. Easy. Nay, if you can't rally upon't, your wound is not over deep, I'm afraid.

L. Bet. Well, that's comfortably said, however.

L. Easy. But come to the point—how far have you been jealous?

L. Bet. Why—O bless me! He gave the music one night to my Lady *Languish* here upon the terrace: and (tho' she and I were very good friends) I remember I cou'd not speak to her in a week for't—Oh!

L. Easy. Nay, now you may laugh if you can; for,

take my word, the marks are upon you—But come—
what else?

L. Bet. O nothing else, upon my word, my dear!
L. Easy. Well, one word more, and then I give sen-
tence; suppose you were heartily convinc'd that he ac-
tually follow'd another woman?

L. Bet. But, pray, my dear, what occasion is there to
suppose any such thing at all?

L. Easy. Guilty, upon my honour.

L. Bet. Pshaw! I defy him to say, that ever I own'd
any inclination for him.

L. Easy. No, but you have given him terrible leave
to guess it.

L. Bet. If ever you see us meet again, you'll have but
little reason to think so, I can assure you.

L. Easy. That I shall see presently; for here comes
Sir Charles, and I'm sure my Lord can't be far off.

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Charles. Servant, Lady Betty—my dear, how do
you do?

L. Easy. At your service, my dear—But pray
what have you done with my Lord Morelope?

L. Bet. Ay, Sir Charles, pray how does your pupil do?
Have you any hopes of him? Is he docible?

Sir Charles. Well, madam, to confess your triumph
over me, as well as him, I own my hopes of him are
lost. I offer'd what I cou'd to his instruction; but he's
incorrigibly yours, and undone—and the news, I pre-
sume, does not displease your Ladyship.

L. Bet. Fy, fy, Sir Charles, you disparage my friend;
I am afraid you don't take pains with him.

Sir Charles. Ha! I fancy, Lady Betty, your good-nature
won't let you sleep o' nights: don't you love dearly to
hurt people?

L. Bet. O! your servant; then without a jest, the
man is so unfortunate in his want of patience, that let
me die, if I don't often pry him.

Sir *Char.* Ha! Strange goodness!—O that I were your lover for a month or two!

L. *Bet.* What then?

Sir *Char.* I wou'd make that pretty heart's blood of yours ach in a fortnight.

L. *Bet.* Hugh!—I should hate you, your assurance wou'd make your address intolerable.

Sir *Char.* I believe it wou'd, for I'd never address to you at all.

L. *Bet.* O! you clown you!

[*Hitting him with her fan.*]

Sir *Char.* Why, what to do? To feed a diseas'd pride, that's eternally breaking out in the affectation of an ill nature that—in my conscience I believe is but affectation.

L. *Bet.* You nor your friend have no great reason to complain of my fondness, I believe. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir *Char.* [*Looking earnestly on her.*] Thou insensible creature! How can you make a jest of a man, whose whole life's but one continu'd torment from your want of common gratitude?

L. *Bet.* Torment! For my part, I really believe him as easy as you are.

Sir *Char.* Poor, intolerable affectation! You know the contrary, you know him blindly yours, you know your power, and the whole pleasure of your life's the poor and low abuse of it.

L. *Bet.* Pray, how do I abuse it—if I have any power?

Sir *Char.* You drive him to extremes that make him mad, then punish him for acting against his reason: you've almost turn'd his brain, his common judgment fails him; he's now, at this very moment, driven by his despair upon a project, in hopes to free him from your power, that I am sensible, and so must any one be that has his sense, of course must ruin him with you, for ever; I almost blush to think of it, yet your unreasonable disdain has forc'd him to it; and should he now suspect I offer'd but a hint of it to you, and in contempt of his design, I know he'd call my life to answer it; but I have no regard to men in madness, I rather

choose for once to trust in your good-nature, in hopes the man, whom your unwary beauty had made miserable, your generosity wou'd scorn to make ridiculous.

L. Bet. Sir *Charles*, you charge me very home; I never had it in my inclination to make any thing ridiculous that did not deserve it. Pray what is this business you think so extravagant in him?

Sir Char. Something so absurdly rash and bold, you'll hardly forgive ev'n me that tell it you.

L. Bet. O fy! If it be a fault, Sir *Charles*, I shall consider it as his, not yours. Pray what is it?

L. Eas. I long to know, methinks.

Sir Char. You may be sure he did not want my dissuasions from it.

L. Bet. Let's hear it.

Sir Char. Why this man, whom I have known to love you with such excess of generous desire, whom I have heard in his ecstatic praises on your beauty talk, till from the soft heat of his distilling thoughts the tears have fall'n—

L. Bet. O! Sir *Charles*—

[*Blushing.*

Sir Char. Nay, grudge not, since 'tis past, to hear what was (tho' you condemn'd it) once his merit: but now I own that merit ought to be forgotten.

L. Bet. Pray, Sir, be plain.

Sir Char. This man, I say, whose unhappy passion has so ill succeeded with you, at last has forfeited all his hopes (into which, pardon me, I confess my friendship had lately flatter'd him) his hopes of even deserving now your lowest pity or regard.

L. Bet. You amaze me—For I can't suppose his utmost malice dares assault my reputation—and what—

Sir Char. No; but he maliciously presumes the world will do it for him; and indeed he has taken no unlikely means to make 'em busy with their tongues: for he is this moment upon the open terrace, in the highest public gallantry with my Lady *Graveairs*. And to convince the world and me, he said he was not that tame lover we fancied him, he'd venture to give her the music to-night: Nay, I heard him, before my face, speak

to one of the hautboys to engage the rest, and desired they would all take their directions only from my Lady *Graveairs*.

L. Bet. My Lady *Graveairs*! Truly I think my Lord's very much in the right on't—for my part, Sir *Charles*, I don't see any thing in this that's so very ridiculous, nor indeed that ought to make me think either the better or worse of him for't.

Sir Char. Pishah! Pishah! Madam, you and I know 'tis not in his power to renounce you; this is but the poor disguise of a resenting passion vainly ruffled to a storm, which the least gentle look from you can reconcile at will, and laugh into a calm again.

L. Bet. Indeed, Sir *Charles*, I shan't give myself that trouble, I believe.

Sir Char. So I told him, madam: Are not all your complaints, said I, already owing to her pride, and can you suppose this public defiance of it (which you know you can't make good too) won't incense her more against you?—That's what I'd have, said he, starting wildly, I care not what becomes of me, so I but live to see her piqued at it.

L. Bet. Upon my word, I fancy my Lord will find himself mistaken—I shan't be piqued, I believe—I must first have a value for the thing I lose, before it piques me: piqued! Ha! ha! ha! [*Disorder'd.*]

Sir Char. Madam, you've said the very thing I urg'd to him; I know her temper so well, said I, that if she doated on you, if you once stood out against her, she'd sooner burst than shew the least motion of uneasiness.

L. Bet. I can assure you, Sir *Charles*, my Lord won't find himself deceiv'd in your opinion—Piqued!

Sir Char. She has it.

[*Aside.*]

L. Eaff. Alas! poor woman! how little do our passions make us?

L. Bet. Not but I wou'd advise him to have a little regard to my reputation in this business: I wou'd have him take heed of publicly affronting me.

Sir Char. Right, madam, that's what strictly warn'd him of: for among friends, whenever the world sees

him follow another woman, the malicious tea-tables will be very apt to be free with your Ladyship.

L. *Bet.* I'd have him consider that, methinks.

Sir *Char.* But alas! madam, 'tis not in his power to think with reason, his mad reasonment has destroy'd ev'n his principles of common honesty: he considers nothing but a senseless proud revenge, which in his fit of lunacy 'tis impossible that either threats or danger can dissuade him from.

L. *Bet.* What! does he defy me, threaten me! then he shall see, that I have passions too, and know, as well as he, to stir my heart against any pride that dares insult me. Does he suppose I fear him? Fear the little malice of a slighted passion, that my own scorn has flung into a despised resentment! Fear him! O! it provokes me to think he dares have such a thought!

L. *Easy.* Dear creature, don't disorder yourself so.

L. *Bet.* Let me but live to see him once more within my power, and I'll forgive the rest of fortune.

L. *Easy.* Well! certainly I am very ill-natur'd; for that I see this news has disturb'd my friend, I can't help being pleas'd with any hope of my Lady *Graveairs* being otherwise disposed of. [*Aside.*] My dear, I am afraid you have provok'd her a little too far.

Sir *Char.* Oh! not at all—You shall see—I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea.

L. *Bet.* I may see him with his complaining face against this tea-table.

Sir *Char.* I am sorry, madam, you so wrongly judge of what I've told you; I was in hopes to have stirr'd your pity, not your anger: I little thought your generosity wou'd punish him for faults, which you yourself resolv'd he should commit.—Yonder he comes, and all the world with him: might I advise you, madam, you shou'd not resent the thing at all—I wou'd not so much as stay to see him in his fault; nay, I'd hear the last that heard of it: nothing can sting him more, or so justly punish his folly, as your utter neglect of it.

L. *Easy.* Come, dear creature, be persuaded, and go

hoare with me ; indeed it will shew more indifference, to avoid him.

L. Bet. No, madam, I'll oblige his vanity for once, and stay to let him see how strangely he has piqued me.

Sir Char. [*Afide.*] O not at all to speak of ; you had as good part with a little of that pride of yours, or I shall yet make it a very troublesome companion to you.

[*Goes from them, and whispers Lord Morelove.*]

Enter Lord Foppington ; a little after, Lord Morelove, Lady Graveairs, and other Ladies.

L. Fop. Ladies, your servant.——O! we have wanted you beyond reparation——such diversion!

L. Bet. Well! my Lord! have you seen my Lord Morelove?

L. Fop. Seen him!——ha! ha! ha!——O, I have such things to tell you, madam——you'll die——

L. Bet. O pray let's hear 'em, I was never in a better humour to receive them.

L. Fop. Hark you.

[*They whisper.*]

L. Mor. So, she's engag'd already.

[*To Sir Charles.*]

Sir Char. So much the better ; make but a just advantage of my success, and she's undone.

L. Fop.

L. Bet. } Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Char. You see already what ridiculous pains she's taking to stir your jealousy, and cover her own.

L. Fop.

L. Bet. } Ha! ha! ha!

L. Mor. O never fear me ; for, upon my word, it now appears ridiculous even to me.

Sir Char. And hark you——

[*Whispers L. Mor.*]

L. Bet. And so the widow was as full of airs as his Lordship?

Sir Char. Only observe that, and 'tis impossible you can fail.

[*Afide.*]

L. Mor. Dear Charles, you have convinc'd me, and I thank you.

L. Grav. My Lord Morelove! What, do you leave us?

L. Mor. Ten thousand pardons, madam, I was but just——

L. Grav. Nay, nay, no excuses, my Lord, so you will but let us have you again.

Sir Char. [*Aside to L. Grav.*]. I see you have good humour, madam, when you like your company.

L. Grav. And you, I see, for all your mighty thirst of dominion, cou'd stoop to be obedient, if one thought it worth one's while to make you so.

Sir Char. Ha! Power would make her an admirable tyrant.

[*Aside.*

L. Easy. [*Observing Sir Charles and L. Graveairs.*]

So! there's another couple have quarrell'd too, I find——

Those airs to my Lord *Morelove*, look as if design'd to recover *Sir Charles* into jealousy: I'll endeavour to join the company, and it may be, that will let me into the secret. [*Aside.*] My Lord *Foppington*, I vow this is very uncomplaisant, to engross so agreeable a part of the company to yourself.

Sir Char. Nay, my Lord, this is not fair indeed, to enter into secrets among friends!——Ladies, what say you! I think we ought to declare against it.

Ladies. O! no secrets, no secrets.

L. Bet. Well; Ladies, I ought only to ask your pardon: my Lord's excusable, for I would haul him into a corner.

L. Fop. I swear 'tis very hard, ho! I observe two people of extreme condition, can no sooner grow particular, but the multitude of both sexes are immediately up, and think their properties invaded——

L. Bet. Odious multitude——

L. Fop. Perish the *Ganaille*!

L. Grav. O, my Lord, we women have all reason to be jealous of Lady *Betty Modish*'s power.

L. Mor. [*To Lady Betty.*] As the men, madam, all have of my Lord *Foppington*; beside, favourites of great merit discourage those of an inferior class for their Prince's service: he has already lost you one of your retinue, madam.

L. Bet. Not at all, my Lord, he has only made room

for another: one must sometimes make vacancies, or there could be no preferments.

L. *Easy*. Ha! ha! Ladies favours, my Lord, like places at court, are not always held for life, you know.

L. *Bet*. No, indeed! if they were, the poor fine women wou'd be always us'd like their wives, and no more minded than the business of the nation.

L. *Easy*. Have a care, madam, an undeserving favourite has been the ruin of many a prince's empire.

L. *Pop*. Ha! ha! Upon my soul, Lady *Betty*, we must grow more discreet; for positively, if we go on at this rate, we shall have the world throw you under the scandal of constancy; and I shall have all the swords of condition at my throat for a monopolist.

L. *Mor*. O! there's no great fear of that, my Lord; tho' the men of sense give it over, there will be always some idle fellows vain enough to believe their merit may succeed as well as your Lordship's.

L. *Bet*. Or if they shou'd not, my Lord, cast-lovers, you know, need not fear being long out of employment, while there are so many well-disposed people in the world—There are generally neglected wives, stale maids, or charitable widows always ready to relieve the necessities of a disappointed passion—and, by the way, hark you, Sir *Charles*.

L. *Mor*. [*Aside*.] So! she's stir'd, I see; for all her pains to hide it—she would hardly have glanc'd an affront at a woman she was not piqued at.

L. *Grav*. [*Aside*.] That wit was thrown at me, I suppose; but I'll return it.

L. *Bet*. [*Sofily to Sir Charles*.] Pray how came you all this while to trust your mistress so easily?

Sir *Char*. One is not so apt, madam, to be alarm'd at the liberties of an old acquaintance, as perhaps your Ladyship ought to be at the resentment of an hard-us'd, honourable lover.

L. *Bet*. Suppose I were alarm'd, how does that make you easy?

Sir *Char*. Come, come, be wise at last; my trusting

them together, may easily convince you, that (as I told you before) I know his addressee to her are only outward, and 'twill be your fault now, if you let him go on 'till the world thinks him in earnest; and a thousand busy tongues are set upon malicious enquiries into your reputation.

L. Bet. Why, Sir Charles, do you suppose, while he behaves himself as he does, that I won't convince him of my indifference?

Sir Char. But hear me, madam——

L. Gray. [Aside.] The air of that whisper looks as if the lady had a mind to be making her peace again; and 'tis possible his worship's being so busy in the matter too, may proceed as much from his jealousy of my Lord with me, as friendship with her, at least I fancy so; therefore I'm resolv'd to keep her still piqued and prevent it, tho' it be only to gall him——Sir Charles, that is not fair to take a privilege you just now declar'd against my Lord Foppington.

L. Mer. Well observ'd, madam.

L. Gray. Beside, it looks so affected to whisper, when every body guesses the secret.

L. Mer. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. O! Madam, your pardon in particular: but 'tis possible you may be mistaken: the secrets of people that have any regard to their actions, are not so soon guess'd, as theirs that have made a confident of the whole town.

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Gray. A coquette in her affected airs of disdain to a revolted lover, I'm afraid, must exceed your Ladyship in prudence, not to let the world see at the same time, she'd give her eyes to make her peace with him: Ha! ha!

L. Mer. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. 'Twould be a mortification indeed, if it were in the power of a fading widow's charms to prevent it; and the man must be miserably reduc'd sure, that cou'd bear to live buried in woolen, or take up with the motherly comforts of a swan-skin pet coat. Ha! ha!

L. *Fop.* Ha! ha! ha!

L. *Grav.* Widows, it seems, are not so squeamish to their interest, they know their own minds, and take the man they like, tho' it happens to be one, that a forward, vain girl has disoblig'd, and is pining to be friends with.

L. *Mor.* Nay, tho' it happens to be one, that confesses he once was fond of a piece of folly, and afterwards ashamed on'to.

L. *Bet.* Nay, my Lord, there's no standing against two of you.

L. *Fop.* No, faith, that's odds at tennis, my Lord: not but if your Ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your back-hand a little: tho' upon my soul you may safely set me up at the line: for, knock me down, if ever I saw a rest of wit better play'd, than that last, in my life. — What say you, madam, shall we engage?

L. *Bet.* As you please, my Lord.

L. *Fop.* Ha! ha! ha! *Allons! tout de bon, jouez, mi lrv.*

L. *Mor.* O pardon me, sir, I shall never think myself in any thing a match for the lady.

L. *Fop.* To you, madam.

L. *Bet.* That's much, my Lord, when the world knows you have been so many years teasing me to play the fool with you.

L. *Fop.* Ah! *bien joué.* Ha! ha! ha!

L. *Mor.* At that game, I confess your Ladyship has chosen a much properer person to improve your hand with.

L. *Fop.* To me, madam. — My Lord, I presume whoever the lady thinks fit to play the fool with, will at least be able to give as much envy as the wise person that had not wit enough to keep well with her when he was so.

L. *Grav.* O! my Lord! Both parties must needs be greatly happy; for I dare swear, neither will have any rivals to disturb 'em.

L. *Mor.* Ha! ha!

L. *Bet.* None that will disturb 'em, I dare swear.

L. *Fop.* Ha! ha! ha!

L. *Mor.*

L. *Grav.* } Ha! ha! he!

L. *Bet.*

Sir *Char.* I don't know, gentle-folks — but you are all in extreme good-humour, methinks, I hope there's none of it affected.

L. *Easy.* I shou'd be loth to answer for any but my Lord *Foppington*. [Aside.

L. *Easy.* Mine is not, I'll swear.

L. *Mor.* Nor mine, I'm sure.

L. *Grav.* Mine's sincere, depend upon't.

L. *Fop.* And may the eternal frowns of the whole sex doubly demme, if mine is not.

L. *Easy.* Well, good people, I am mighty glad to hear it: You have all perform'd extremely well; but if you please, you shall ev'n give over your wit now, while it is well.

L. *Bet.* [To herself.] Now I see his humour, I'll stand it out, if I were sure to die for't.

Sir *Char.* You shou'd not have proceeded so far with my Lord *Foppington*, after what I had told you.

[Aside to L. *Bet.*

L. *Bet.* Pray, Sir *Char.*, give me leave to understand myself a little.

Sir *Char.* Your pardon, madam; I thought a right understanding wou'd have been for both your interests, and reputation.

L. *Bet.* For his, perhaps.

Sir *Char.* Nay then, madam, 'tis time for me to take care of my friend.

L. *Bet.* I never in the least doubted your friendship to him in any thing that was to shew yourself my enemy.

Sir *Char.* Since I see, madam, you have so ungrateful a sense of my Lord *Morlove's* merit, and my service, I shall never be ashamed of using my power henceforth to keep him entirely out of your Ladyship's.

L. *Bet.* Was ever any thing so insolent! I could find

in my heart to run the hazard of a downright compliance, if it were only to convince him, that my power, perhaps, is not inferior to his. [To herself.]

L. *Easy*. My Lord *Foppington*, I think you generally lead the company upon these occasions. Pray, will you think of some prettier sort of diversion for us, than parties and whispers?

L. *Fop*. What say you, Ladies, shall we step and see what's done at the Bassinet-table?

L. *Bet*. With all my heart; Lady *Easy*——

L. *Easy*. I think 'tis the best thing we can do, and because we won't part to-night, you shall all sup where you din'd—What say you, my Lord?

L. *Mor*. Your Ladyship may be sure of me, madam.

L. *Fop*. Ay! ay! we'll all come.

L. *Easy*. Then pray let's change parties a little. My Lord *Foppington*, you shall squire me.

L. *Fop*. O! you do me honour, madam.

L. *Bet*. My Lord *Morelove*, pray let me speak with you.

L. *Mor*. Me, madam?

L. *Bet*. If you please, my Lord.

L. *Mor*. Ha! That look shot through me! what can this mean? [Aside.]

L. *Bet*. This is no proper place to tell you what it is, but there is one thing I'd fain be truly answer'd in: I suppose you'll be at my Lady *Easy*'s by and bye, and if you'll give me leave there——

L. *Mor*. If you please to do me that honour, madam, I shall certainly be there.

L. *Bet*. That's all, my Lord.

L. *Mor*. Is not your Ladyship for walking?

L. *Bet*. If your Lordship dares venture with me.

L. *Mor*. O! madam! [Taking her Hand.] How my heart dances, what heav'nly music's in her voice, when soft'ned into kindness. [Aside.]

L. *Bet*. Ha! his hand trembles—Sir *Charles* may be mistaken.

L. *Fop*. My Lady *Graveairs*, you won't let Sir *Charles* leave us?

L. *Grav.* No, my Lord, we'll follow you—stay a little. [To Sir Char.]

Sir *Char.* I thought your Ladyship design'd to follow 'em.

L. *Grav.* Perhaps I'd speak with you.

Sir *Char.* But, madam, consider, we shall certainly be observ'd.

L. *Grav.* Lord, Sir! If you think it such a favour.

[Exit hastily.]

Sir *Char.* Is she gone, let her go, &c.

[Exit singing.]



ACT V. SCENE I.

The SCENE continues.

Enter Sir Charles and Lord Morelove.

Sir *Char.* COME a little this way——my Lady *Graveairs* had an eye upon me as I stole off, and I'm apprehensive will make use of any opportunity to talk with me.

L. *Mor.* O! we are pretty safe here——well; you were speaking of Lady *Betty*.

Sir *Char.* Ay, my Lord—I say, notwithstanding all this sudden change of her behaviour, I wou'd not have you yet be too secure of her: for, between you and I, since I told you, I have profess'd myself an open enemy to her power with you, 'tis not impossible but this new air of good-humour may very much proceed from a little woman's pride, of convincing me you are not yet out of her power.

L. *Mor.* Not unlikely: but still can we make no advantage of it?

Sir *Char.* That's what I have been thinking of——
shook you—Death! my Lady *Graveairs*!

L. *Mor.* Ha! She will have audience, I find.

Sir *Char.* There's no avoiding her—the truth is, I
have ow'd her a little good-nature a great while—I see
there is but one way of getting rid of her—I must ev'n
appoint her a day of payment at last. If you'll step into
my lodgings, my Lord, I'll just give her an answer, and
be with you in a moment.

L. *Mor.* Very well, I'll stay there for you.

[Exit L. *Morelove*.

Enter L. Graveairs on the other side.

L. *Grav.* Sir *Charles*!

Sir *Char.* Come, come, no more of these reproach-
ful looks; you'll find, madam, I have deserv'd better
of you than your jealousy imagines——Is it a fault to
be tender of your reputation?——Fy, fy——This
may be a proper time to talk, and of my contriving too
——You see I just now shook off my Lord *Morelove* on
purpose.

L. *Grav.* May I believe you?

Sir *Char.* Still doubting my fidelity, and mistaking
my discretion for want of good-nature.

L. *Grav.* Don't think me troublesome—for I confess
'tis death to think of parting with you; since the world
sees, for you I have neglected friends and reputation;
have stood the little insults of disdainful prudes, that en-
vy'd me perhaps your friendship; have borne the freez-
ing looks of near and general acquaintance——Since
this is so——don't let 'em ridicule me too, and say my
foolish vanity undid me; don't let 'em point at me as a
cast mistress.

Sir *Char.* You wrong me to suppose the thought:
you'll have better of me when we meet: when shall you
be at leisure?

L. *Grav.* I confess, I would see you once again; if
what I have more to say prove ineffectual, perhaps it
may convince me then, 'tis my interest to part with
you——Can you come to-night?

Sir Char. You know we have company, and I'm afraid they'll stay too late——Can't it be before supper——What's o'clock now?

L. Grav. It's almost six.

Sir Char. At seven then be sure of me; 'till when I'd have you go back to the ladies to avoid suspicion, and about that time have the vapours.

L. Grav. May I depend upon you? [Exit.]

Sir Char. Depend on every thing——A very troublesome business this——send me once fairly rid on't——if ever I'm caught in an *honourable* affair again!——A debt now that a little ready civility, and away, would satisfy, a man might bear with; but to have a rent charge upon one's good-nature, with an unconscionable long scroll of arrears too, that would eat out the profits of the best estate in Christendom——ah——intolerable! Well, I'll say'n to my Lord, and shake off the thoughts on't.

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[Exit.]

Enter Lady Betty and Lady Easy.

L. Bet. I observe, my dear, you have usually this great fortune at play, it were enough to make one suspect your good luck with an husband.

L. Easy. Truly I don't complain of my fortune either way.

L. Bet. Pr'ythee tell me, you are often advising me to it; are there those real comfortable advantages in marriage, that our old aunts and grandmothers would persuade us of?

L. Easy. Upon my word, if I had the worst husband in the world, I should still think so.

L. Bet. Ay; but then the hazard of not having a good one, my dear.

L. Easy. You may have a good one, I dare say, if you don't give yourself airs till you spoil him.

L. Bet. Can there be the same dear, full delight in giving ease, as pain? O! my dear, the thought of parting with one's power is insupportable.

L. Easy. And the keeping it, till it dwindles into no power at all, is most ruefully foolish.

L. Bet. But still to marry before one's heartily in love——

L. Easy. Is not half so formidable a calamity—— but if I have any eyes, my dear, you'll run no great hazard of that in venturing on my Lord *Morelove*—— You don't know, perhaps, that within this half hour the tone of your voice is strangely soften'd to him, ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. My dear, you are positively, one or other, the most censorious creature in the world——and so I see it's in vain to talk with you——Pray, will you go back to the company?

L. Easy. Ah! Poor Lady *Betty*! [Exit.

The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's Lodgings.

Enter Sir Charles and Lord Morelove.

L. Mor. *Charles*! you have transported me! you have made my part in the scene so very easy too, 'tis impossible I shall fail in it.

Sir Char. That's what I considered; for now the more you throw yourself into her power, the more I shall be able to throw her into yours.

L. Mor. After all (begging the ladies pardon) your fine women, like bullies, are only stout when they know their men: a man of an honest courage may fright 'em into any thing! Well, I am fully instructed, and will about it instantly——Won't you go along with me?

Sir Char. That may not be so proper;——besides, I have a little business upon my hands.

L. Mor. O! your servant, Sir——Good-by to you——you shan't stir.

Sir Char. My Lord, your servant——[Exit *L. Mor.* So! now to dispose of myself, 'till 'tis time to think of my Lady *Graveairs*——Umph! I have no great maw to that business, methinks. I don't find myself in humour enough to come up to the civil things, that are usually expected in the making up of an old quarrel——

[*Edging crosses the Stage.*] There goes a warmer temptation by half: — Ha! into my wife's bed-chamber too — I question if the jade has any great business there; — I have a fancy she has only a mind to be taking the opportunity of nobody's being at home, to make her peace with me. — Let me see — ay, I shall have time enough to go to her Ladyship afterwards — Besides, I want a little sleep, I find — Your young fops may talk of their women of quality — but to me now, there's a strange agreeable convenience in a creature one is not oblig'd to say much to upon these occasions. [*Going.*]

Enter Edging.

Edg. Did you call me, sir?

Sir Char. Ha! all's right — [*Aside.*] — Yes, madam, I did call you. [*Sits down.*]

Edg. What wou'd you please to have, sir?

Sir Char. Have! why, I wou'd have you grow a good girl, and know when you are well us'd, hussy.

Edg. Sir, I don't complain of any thing, not I.

Sir Char. Well, don't be uneasy — I am not angry with you now — Come and kiss me.

Edg. Lard, sir!

Sir Char. Don't be a fool now — come hither.

Edg. Pshaw — [*Goes to him.*]

Sir Char. No wry face — so — sit down. I won't have you look grave neither; let me see you smile, you jade you.

Edg. Ha! ha! [*Laughs and blushes.*]

Sir Char. Ah, you melting rogue!

Edg. Come, don't you be at your tricks now — Lard! can't you sit still and talk with one! I am sure there's ten times more love in that, and fifty times the satisfaction, people may say what they will.

Sir Char. Well! now you're good, you shall have your own way — I am going to lie down in the next room; and, since you love a little chat, come and throw my night-gown over me, and you shall talk me to sleep.

[*Exit Sir Charles.*]

Edg. Yes, Sir——for all his way, I see he likes me still.
[Exit after him.]

The SCENE changes to the Terrace.

Enter Lady Betty, Lady Easy, and Lord Morelove.

L. Mor. Nay, madam, there you are too severe upon him; for bating now and then a little vanity, my Lord *Foppington* does not want wit sometimes to make him a tolerable woman's man.

L. Bet. But such eternal vanity grows tiresome.

L. Easy. Come, if he were not so loose in his morals, vanity methinks might be easily excus'd, considering how much 'tis in fashion: for pray observe, what's half the conversation of most of the fine young people about town, but a perpetual affectation of appearing foremost in the knowledge of manners, new modes, and scandal? and in that I don't see any body comes up to him.

L. Mor. Nor I indeed—and here he comes——Pray, madam, let's have a little more of him; nobody shews him to more advantage than your Ladyship.

L. Bet. Nay, with all my heart; you'll second me, my Lord.

L. Mor. Upon occasion, madam——

L. Easy. Engaging upon parties, my Lord?

[Aside, and smiling to L. Mor.]

Enter Lord Foppington.

L. Fop. So, Ladies! what's the affair now?

L. Bet. Why, you were, my Lord; I was allowing you a great many good qualities, but Lady *Easy* says you are a perfect hypocrite: and that whatever airs you give yourself to the women, she's confident you value no woman in the world equal to your own lady.

L. Pop. You see, madam, how I am scandaliz'd upon your account. But 'tis natural for a prude to be malicious, when a man endeavours to be well with any body but herself; did you never observe she was piqu'd at that before? Ha! ha!

L. Bet. I'll swear you are a provoking creature.

L. Pop. Let's be more familiar upon't, and give her disorder! Ha! ha!

L. Bet. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Pop. Stap my breath, but Lady *Easy* is an admirable discoverer—Marriage is indeed a prodigious security of one's inclination: a man's likely to take a world of pains in an employment, where he can't be turn'd out for his idleness.

L. Bet. I vow, my Lord, that's vastly generous to all the fine women; you are for giving them a despotic power in love, I see, to reward and punish as they think fit.

L. Pop. Ha! ha! Right, madam, what signifies beauty without power? And a fine woman when she's married makes as ridiculous a figure, as a beaten general marching out of a garrison.

L. Easy. I'm afraid, Lady *Betty*, the greatest danger in your use of power, would be from too heedless a liberality: you would more mind the man than his merit.

L. Pop. Piqued again, by all that's fretful—Well, certainly to give envy is a pleasure inexpressible.

[To Lady *Betty*.

L. Bet. Ha! ha!

L. Easy. Does not she shew him well, my Lord?

[Aside to *L. Mor.*

L. Mor. Perfectly, and me to myself—for now I almost blush to think I ever was uneasy at him.

[To Lady *Easy*.

L. Pop. Lady *Easy*, I ask ten thousand pardons, I'm afraid I am rude all this while.

L. Easy. O not at all, my Lord! You are always good company when you please: not but in some things, indeed, you are apt to be like other fine gentlemen, a little too loose in your principles.

L. Pop. O, madam, never to the offence of the ladies ; I agree in any community with them : no body is a more constant churchman, when the fine women are there.

L. Easy. O fy, my Lord ! you ought not to go for their sakes at all And I wonder, you that are for being such a good husband of your virtues, are not afraid of bringing your prudence into a lampoon or a play.

L. Bet. Lampoons and plays, madam, are only things to be laugh'd at.

L. Mor. Plays now, indeed, one need not be so much afraid of ; for since the late short-sighted view of 'em, vice may go on and prosper ; the stage dares hardly shew a vicious person speaking like himself, for fear of being call'd prophane for exposing him.

L. Easy. 'Tis hard, indeed, when people won't distinguish between what's meant for contempt, and what for example.

L. Pop. Od so ! Ladies, the Court's coming home, I see ; shall we not make our bows ?

L. Bet. O ! by all means.

L. Easy. Lady *Betty*, I must leave you : for I'm oblig'd to write letters, and I know you won't give me time after supper.

L. Bet. Well, my dear, I'll make a short visit and be with you.

[Exit Lady Easy.]
Pray what's become of my Lady *Graveairs* ?

L. Mor. Oh, I believe she's gone home, madam ; she seem'd not to be very well.

L. Pop. And where's Sir *Charles*, my Lord ?

L. Mor. I left him at his own lodgings.

L. Bet. He's upon some ramble, I'm afraid.

L. Pop. Nay, as for that matter, a man may ramble at home sometimes—But here come the chaises ; we must make a little more haste, madam.

[Exeunt.]

The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's Lodgings.

Enter Lady Easy, and a Servant.

L. Easy. Is your master come home?

Serv. Yes, madam.

L. Easy. Where is he?

Serv. I believe, madam, he's laid down to sleep.

L. Easy. Where's *Edging*? Bid her get me some wax and paper——stay, 'tis no matter, now I think on it——there's some above upon my toilet. [*Exeunt severally.*]

The SCENE opens and discovers Sir Charles without his Perwig, and Edging by him, both asleep in two easy Chairs.

Then enter Lady Easy, who starts and trembles, some time unable to speak.

L. Easy. Ha!

Protect me, virtue, patience, reason!
Teach me to bear this killing sight, or let
Me think my dreaming senses are deceiv'd!
For sure a sight like this, might raise the arm
Of Duty, ev'n to the breast of Love! At least
I'll throw this vizard of my patience off:
Now wake him in his guilt,
And barefac'd front him with my wrongs.
I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay till he——
Frowns on me, perhaps——and then
I'm lost again——The ease of a few tears
Is all that's left to me——
And duty too forbids me to insult,
When I have vow'd obedience——Perhaps
The fault's in me, and Nature has not form'd
Me with the thousand little requisites
That warm the heart to love——

Somewhere there is a fault ———

But Heav'n best knows what both of us deserve : : : ?

Ha ! Bare-headed, and in so sound a sleep !

Who knows, while thus expos'd to th' unwholesome air,

But Heav'n offended may overtake his crime,

And, in some languishing dilemma, leave him.

A severe example of its violated laws ———

Forbid it mercy ! and forbid it love !

This may prevent it.

[Takes a Strinkirk off her neck, and lays it gently on his head.]

And if he should wake offended at my too busy care, let my heart-breaking patience, duty, and my fond affection plead my pardon. *[Exit.]*

[After she has been out some time, a bell rings, edging wakes and fears Sir Charles.]

Edg. Oh !

Sir Char. How now ? what's the matter ?

Edg. O ! blest my soul, my Lady's come home.

Sir Char. Go, go then. *[Bell rings.]*

Edg. O lud ! my head's in such a condition too.

[Runs to the Glass.] I am coming, madam — O lud ! here's no Powder neither — Here, madam. *[Exit.]*

Sir Char. How now ? *[Feeling the Strinkirk upon his Head.]* What's this ? How came it here ? *[Puts on his Wig.]* Did not I see my wife wear this to-day ? — Death ! she can't have been here, sure — It could not be jealousy that brought her home — for my coming was accidental — so too, I fear, might her's. —

How careless have I been ? — not to secure the door neither — 'Twas foolish — It must be so ! She certainly has seen me here sleeping with her woman : — If so, how low an hypocrite to her must that sight have proved me ? — The thought has made me despicable ev'n to myself — How mean a vice is lying ? and how often have these empty pleasures lull'd my honour and my conscience to a lethargy, — while I grossly have abus'd her ? poorly skulking behind a thousand falsehoods ? Now I reflect, this has not been the first of her discoveries — How contemptible a figure must

I have made to her!——A crowd of recollected circumstances confirms me now, she has been long acquainted with my follies, and yet with what amazing prudence has she borne the secret pangs of injur'd love, and wore an everlasting smile to me? This asks a little thinking——something should be done——I'll see her instantly, and be resolv'd from her behaviour. [*Exit.*]

The SCENE changes to another Room.

Enter Lady Easy and Edging.

L. Easy. Where have you been, *Edging*?

Edg. Been, madam! I—I—I—I came as soon as I heard you ring, madam.

L. Easy. How guilt confounds her! But she's below my thought——Fetch my last new scarf hither——I have a mind to alter it a little——make haste.

Edg. Yes, madam.——I see she does not suspect any thing.

L. Easy. Heigh-ho! [*Sitting down.*] I had forgot——but I am unfit for writing now——'Twas an hard conflict——yet 'tis a joy to think it over: a secret pride, to tell my heart my conduct has been just.——How low are vicious minds that offer injuries; how much superior innocence that bears 'em——Still there's a pleasure ev'n in the melancholy of a quiet conscience.——Away my fears, it is not yet impossible——for while his human nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair.

Re-enter Edging with a Scarf.

Edg. Here's the scarf, madam.

L. Easy. So, sit down there——and, let me see——here——rip off all that silver.

Edg. Indeed, I always thought it would become your Ladyship better without it——But now suppose, madam, you carried another row of gold round the scollops,

and then you take and lay this silver plain all along the gathers, and your Ladyship will perfectly see, it will give the thing ten thousand times another air.

L. Easy. Pr'ythee don't be impertinent, do as I bid you.

Edg. Nay, madam, with all my heart, your Ladyship may do as you please.

L. Easy. This creature grows so confident, and I dare not part with her, lest he should think it jealousy.

[*Aside.*]

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Char. So, my dear! What, at work! how are you employ'd, pray?

L. Easy. I was thinking to alter this scarf, here.

Sir Char. What's amiss? Methinks 'tis very pretty.

Edg. Yes, sir, 'tis pretty enough for that matter, but my Lady has a mind it should be proper too.

Sir Char. Indeed!

L. Easy. I fancy plain gold and black would become me better.

Sir Char. That's a grave thought, my dear.

Edg. O dear sir, not at all, my Lady's much in the right; I am sure, as it is, 'tis fit for nothing but a girl.

Sir Char. Leave the room.

Edg. Lard, Sir! I can't stir—I must stay to—

Sir Char. Go ——— [Angrily.]

Edg. [Throwing down the work hastily, and crying, aside.] If ever I speak to him again, I'll be burn'd.

[Exit Edging.]

Sir Char. Sit still, my dear,—I came to talk with you—and, which you may well wonder at, what I have to say is of importance too, but it is in order to my hereafter always talking to you.

L. Easy. Your words were never disobliging, nor can I charge you with a look that ever had the appearance of unkind.

Sir Char. The perpetual spring of your good-humour, lets me draw no merit from what I have appear'd to be,

which makes me curious now to know your thoughts of what I really am; and having never ask'd you this before, it puzzles me; nor can I (my strange negligence consider'd) reconcile to reason your first thoughts of venturing upon marriage with me.

L. Easy. I never thought it such a hazard.

Sir Char. How cou'd a woman of your restraint in principles, sedateness, sense, and tender disposition, propose to live an happy life with one (now I reflect) that hardly took an hour's pains, ev'n before marriage, to appear but what I am: a loose, unheeded wretch, absent in all I do; civil, and as often rude without design; unseasonably thoughtful, easy to a fault, and in my best of praise, but carelessly good-natur'd: how shall I reconcile your temper with having made so strange a choice?

L. Easy. Your own words may answer you—Your having never seem'd to be, but what you really were; and thro' that carelessness of temper there still shone forth to me an undesigning honesty! I always doubted of in smoother faces: thus while I saw you took least pains to win me, you pleas'd and woo'd me most: nay, I have thought, that such a temper could never be deliberately unkind: or at the worst, I knew that errors from want of thinking might be borne; at least, when probably one moment's serious thought would end 'em: these were my worst of fears, and these, when weigh'd by growing love against my solid hopes, were nothing.

Sir Char. My dear, your understanding flatters me, and justly calls my own in question: I blush to think I've worn so bright a jewel in my bosom, and till this hour, have scarce been curious once to look upon its lustre.

L. Easy. You set too high a value on the common qualities of an easy wife.

Sir Char. Virtues, like benefits, are double when conceal'd: and I confess, I yet suspect you of an higher value far than I have spoke you.

L. Easy. I understand you not.

Sir *Char.* I'll speak more plainly to you—be free and tell me—Where did you leave this handkerchief?

L. Easy. Ha!

Sir *Char.* What is't you start at? You hear the question.

L. Easy. What shall I say? my fears confound me.

Sir *Char.* Be not concern'd, my dear, be easy in the truth, and tell me.

L. Easy. I cannot speak—and I could wish you'd not oblige me to it—'tis the only thing I ever yet refus'd you—and tho' I want reason for my will, let me not answer you.

Sir *Char.* Your will then be a reason; and since I see you are so generously tender of reproaching me, 'tis fit I shou'd be easy in my gratitude, and make what ought to be my shame, my joy; let me be therefore pleas'd to tell you now, your wondrous conduct has wak'd me to a sense of your disquiet past, and resolution never to disturb it more—And (not that I offer it as a merit, but yet in blind compliance to my will) let me beg you would immediately discharge your woman.

L. Easy. Alas! I think not of her—O, my dear! distract me not with this excess of goodness. [*Weeping.*]

Sir *Char.* Nay, praise me not, lest I reflect how little I have deserved it—I see you're in pain to give me this confusion—Come, I will not shock your softness by my untimely blush for what is past, but rather soothe you to a pleasure at my sense of joy, for my recover'd happiness to come. Give then to my new-born love what name you please, it cannot, shall not be too kind: O! it cannot be too soft for what my soul swells up with emulation to deserve—Receive me then entire at last, and take what yet no woman ever truly had, my conquer'd heart.

L. Easy. O the soft treasure! O the dear reward of long-desiring love—Now I am blest indeed, to see you kind without th' expence of pain in being so, to make you mine with easiness: Thus! thus to have you mine, is something more than happiness; 'tis double life, and madness of abounding joy. But 'twas a pain intolerable to give you a confusion.

Sir Char. O thou engaging virtue! But I'm too slow in doing justice to thy love: I know thy softness will refuse me; but remember I insist upon it——let thy woman be discharg'd this minute.

L. Easy. No, my dear, think me not so low in faith, to fear that after what you've said, 'twill ever be in her power to do me future injury: when I can conveniently provide for her, I'll think on't: but to discharge her now, might let her guess at the occasion; and methinks I wou'd have all our differences, like our endearments, be equally a secret to our servants.

Sir Char. Still my superior every way——be it as you have better thought——Well, my dear, now I'll confess a thing that was not in your power to accuse me of; to be short, I own this creature is not the only one I have been to blame with.

L. Easy. I know she is not, and was always less concern'd to find it so, for constancy in errors might have been fatal to me.

Sir Char. What is't you know, my dear?

L. Easy. Come, I am not afraid to accuse you now——*[Surpriz'd.]* my Lady *Graveairs*——Your carelessness, my dear, let all the world know it, and it wou'd have been hard indeed, had it been only to me a secret.

Sir Char. My dear, I'll ask no more questions, for fear of being more ridiculous: I do confess I thought my discretion had been a master-piece——How contemptible must I have look'd all this while?

L. Easy. You shan't say so.

Sir Char. Well, to let you see I had some shame, as well as nature in me, I had writ this to my Lady *Graveairs*, upon my first discovering that you knew I had wrong'd you: read it.

L. Easy. *[Reads.]* “Something has happen'd, that
“ prevents the visit I intended you; and
“ I could gladly wish, you never wou'd re-
“ proach me if I tell you, 'tis utterly incon-
“ venient that I should ever see you more.”

This indeed was more than I had merited.

Enter Servant.

Sir Char. Who's there? Here——Step with this to my Lady *Graveairs*.

[Seals the letter, and gives it to the servant.]

Serv. Yes, Sir——Madam, my Lady *Betty's* come.

L. *Easy*. I'll wait on her.

Sir Char. My dear, I'm thinking there may be other things my negligence may have wrong'd you in; but be assur'd, as I discover 'em, all shall be corrected; is there any part or circumstance in your fortune that I can change, or yet make easier to you?

L. *Easy*. None, my dear, your good-nature never flinted me in that; and now, methinks, I have less occasion there than ever.

Re enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, my Lord *Morelove's* come.

Sir Char. I am coming——I think I told you of the design we had laid against Lady *Betty*.

L. *Easy*. You did, and I shou'd be pleas'd to be myself concern'd in it.

Sir Char. I believe we may employ you: I know he waits for me with impatience. But, my dear, won't you think me tasteless to the joy you've given me, to suffer at this time any concern but you t'employ my thoughts?

L. *Easy*. Seasons must be obey'd; and since I know your friend's happiness depending, I cou'd not taste my own, shou'd you neglect it.

Sir Char. Thou easy sweetness!——O! what a waste on thy neglected love has my unthinking brain committed? But time and future thrift of tenderness shall yet repair it all. The hours will come when this soft, gliding stream that swells my heart, uninterrupted shall renew its course——

And like the ocean after ebb, shall move
With constant force of due returning love.

[Exit.]

The SCENE changes to another Room.

And then re enter Lady Easy and Lady Betty.

L. *Bet.* You've been in tears, my dear, and yet you look pleas'd too.

L. *Easy.* You'll pardon me if I don't let you into circumstances: but be satisfied, Sir *Charles* has made me happy, ev'n to a pain of joy.

L. *Bet.* Indeed I'm truly glad of it, tho' I am sorry to find that any one who has generosity enough to do you justice, shou'd, unprovok'd, be so great an enemy to me.

L. *Easy.* Sir *Charles* your enemy!

L. *Bet.* My dear, you'll pardon me if I always thought him so; but now I am convinc'd of it.

L. *Easy.* In what, pray? I can't think you'll find him so.

L. *Bet.* O! madam, it has been his whole business of late to make an utter breach between my Lord *Morelove* and me.

L. *Easy.* That may be owing to your usage of my Lord: perhaps he thought it wou'd not disoblige you; I am confident you are mistaken in him.

L. *Bet.* O! I don't use to be out in things of this nature; I can see well enough: but I shall be able to tell you more when I have talk'd with my Lord.

L. *Easy.* Here he comes; and because you shall talk with him—No excuses—for, positively I will leave you together.

L. *Bet.* Indeed, my dear, I desire you would stay then; for I know you think now, that I have a mind to—to—

L. *Easy.* To—to—hah! hah! hah!—[Goes.]

L. *Bet.* Well! remember this.

Enter Lord Morelove.

L. *Mer.* I hope I don't fright you away, madam?

L. Easy. Not at all, my Lord ; but I must beg your pardon for a moment, I'll wait upon you immediately.

[*Exit.*

L. Bet. My Lady *Easy* gone!

L. Mor. Perhaps, madam, in friendship to you ; she thinks I may have deserv'd the coldness you of late have shewn me, and was willing to give you this opportunity to convince me, you have not done it without just grounds and reason.

L. Bet. How handsomely does he reproach me ? But I can't bear that he should think I know it—[*Aside.* My Lord, whatever has pass'd between you and me, I dare swear that could not be her thoughts at this time ; for when two people have appear'd profess'd enemies, she can't but think one will as little care to give, as t'other to receive, a justification of their actions.

L. Mor. Passion indeed often does repeated injuries on both sides, but I don't remember in my heat of error I ever yet profess'd myself your enemy.

L. Bet. My Lord, I shall be very free with you—I confess I do think now I have not a greater enemy in the world.

L. Mor. If having long loved you, to my own disquiet, be injurious, I am contented then to stand the foremost of your enemies.

L. Bet. O my Lord, there's no great fear of your being my enemy, that way, I dare say——

L. Mor. There's no other way my heart can bear to offend you now, and I foresee in that it will persist to my undoing.

L. Bet. Fy, fy, my Lord, we know where your heart is; well enough.

L. Mor. My conduct has indeed deserv'd this scorn, and therefore 'tis but just I should submit to your resentment, and beg (tho' I'm assur'd in vain) for pardon.

[*Kneels.*

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Char. How, my Lord !

[*L. Mor. rises.*

L. Bet. Hah ! He here ? This was unlucky. [*Aside.*

L. Mor. O pity my confusion ! [To L. Bet.

Sir Char. I am sorry to see you can so soon forget yourself: methinks the insult you have borne from that Lady, by this time should have warn'd you into a disgust of her regardless principles.

L. Mor. Hold, Sir Charles! While you and I are friends, I desire you would speak with honour of this Lady——'Tis sufficient I have no complaint against her, and——

L. Bet. My Lord, I beg you wou'd resent this thing no farther: an injury like this, is better punish'd with our contempt; apparent malice shou'd only be laugh'd at.

Sir Char. Ha! ha! the old recourse. Offers of any hopes to delude him from his resentment; and then, as the Grand Monarch did with *Cavalier*, you are sure to keep your word with him.

L. Bet. Sir Charles, to let you know how far I am above your little spleen, my Lord, your hand from this hour.

Sir Char. Pshah! Pshah! All design! all pique! mere artifice, and disappointed woman.

L. Bet. Look you, Sir, not that I doubt my Lord's opinion of me; yet——

Sir Char. Look you, madam, in short, your word has been too often taken to let you make up quarrels, as you used to do, with a soft look and a fair promise you never intended to keep.

L. Bet. Was ever such an insolence? He won't give me leave to speak.

L. Mor. Sir Charles!

L. Bet. No, pray, my Lord, have patience: and since his malice seems to grow particular, I dare his worst, and urge him to the proof on't: pray, sir, wherein can you charge me with breach of promise to my Lord?

Sir Char. Death, you won't deny it? How often, to piece up a quarrel, have you appointed him to visit you alone; and tho' you have promis'd to see no other company the whole day, when he was come, he has found you among the laugh of noisy fops, coquets,

and cockbombs; dissolutely gay, while your full eyes ran o'er with transport of their flattery, and your own vain power of pleasing? How often, I say, have you been known to throw away, at least, four hours of your good-humour upon such wretches? and the minute they were gone, grew only dull to him; sunk into a distasteful spleen, complain'd you had talk'd yourself into the head-ach, and then indulg'd upon the dear delight of seeing him in pain: and by that time you had stretch'd, and gap'd him heartily out of patience, of a sudden most importantly remember you had outsat your appointment with my Lady Fiddle-faddle; and immediately order your coach to the Park?

L. Bet. Yet, sir, have you done?

Sir Char. No——tho' this might serve to shew the nature of your principles: but the noble conquest you have gain'd at last over defeated sense of reputation too, has made your fame immortal.

L. Mor. How, sir?

L. Bet. My reputation!

Sir Char. Ay, madam, your reputation——my Lord, if I advance a falsehood, then resent it——I say, your reputation——'t has been your life's whole pride of late, to be the common toast of every public table, vain even in the infamous addresses of a married man, my Lord Foppington: let that be reconcil'd with reputation, I'll now shake hands with shame, and bow me to the low contempt which you deserve from him; not but I suppose you'll yet endeavour to recover him. Now you find ill usage in danger of losing your conquest, 'tis possible you'll stop at nothing to preserve it.

L. Bet. Sir Charles——

[Walks disorder'd, and he after her.]

Sir Char. I know your vanity is so voracious, 'twill ev'n wound itself to feed itself; offer him a blank, perhaps, to fill up with hopes of what nature he pleases, and part with even your pride to keep him.

L. Bet. Sir Charles, I have not deserv'd this of you:

[Bursting into tears.]

Sir Char. Ah! true woman, drop him a soft dis-

sembling tear, and then his just resentment must be hush'd of course.

L. *Mor.* O *Charles* ! I can bear no more, those tears are too reproaching.

Sir *Char.* Hift for your life ! [*Aside, and then aloud.* My Lord, if you believe her, you're undone ; the very next sigh of my Lord *Foppington*, wou'd make her yet forswear all that she can promise.

L. *Bet.* My Lord *Foppington* ! Is that the mighty crime that must condemn me then ? You know I us'd him but as a tool of my resentment, which you yourself, by a pretended friendship to us both, most artfully provok'd me to.——

L. *Mor.* Hold, I conjure you, madam, I want not this conviction.

L. *Bet.* Send for him this minute, and you and he shall both be witnesses of the contempt and detestation I have for any forward hopes his vanity may have given him, or your malice would insinuate.

Sir *Char.* Death ! you would as soon eat fire, as soon part with your luxurious taste of folly, as dare to own the half of this before his face, or any one, that would make you blush to deny it to——Here comes my wife, now we shall see——Ha ! and my Lord *Foppington* with her——Now ! now, we shall see this mighty proof of your sincerity——Now ! my Lord, you'll have a warning sure, and henceforth know me for your friend indeed——

Enter Lady Easy, and Lord Foppington.

L. *Easy.* In tears, my dear ! what's the matter ?

L. *Bet.* O, my dear, all I told you's true ; Sir *Charles* has shewn himself so inveterably my enemy, that if I believ'd I deserv'd but half his hate, 'twould make me hate myself.

L. *Fop.* Hark you, *Charles*, pr'ythee what is this business ?

Sir *Char.* Why your's, my Lord, for aught I know——I have made such a breach betwixt 'em——I can't pro-

mise much for the courage of a woman; but if her's holds, I'm sure 'tis wide enough, you may enter ten a-breast, my Lord.

L. *Fop*. Say'st thou so, *Charles*? then I hold six to four I am the first man in the town.

L. *Easy*. Sure there must be some mistake in this; I hope he has not made my Lord your enemy.

L. *Bet*. I know not what he has done.

L. *Mor*. Far be that thought! Alas! I am too much in fear myself, that what I have this day committed, advis'd by his mistaken friendship, may have done my love irreparable prejudice.

L. *Bet*. No, my Lord, since I perceive his little arts have not prevail'd upon your good nature, to my prejudice, I am bound in gratitude, in duty to myself, and to the confession you have made, my Lord, to acknowledge now, I have been to blame too.

L. *Mor*. Ha! is't possible? can you own so much? O my transported heart!

L. *Bet*. He says I have taken pleasure in seeing you uneasy—I own it—but 'twas when that uneasiness I thought proceeded from your love; and if you did love—'twill not be much to pardon it.

L. *Mor*. O let my soul, thus bending to your power, adore this soft descending goodness!

L. *Bet*. And since the giddy woman's flights I have shewn you too often, have been publick, 'tis fit at last the amends and reparation should be so: therefore what I offer'd to Sir *Charles*, I now repeat before this company, my utter detestation of any past or future gallantry that has or shall be offer'd by me to your uneasiness.

L. *Mor*. O be less generous, or teach me to deserve it—Now blush, Sir *Charles*, at your injurious accusation.

L. *Fop*. Hah! *Pardi voilà quelque chose d'extraordinaire.*

[*Aside*.

L. *Bet*. As for my Lord *Foppington*, I owe him thanks for having been so friendly an instrument of our reconciliation; for though, in the little outward

Assantry I receiv'd from him, I did not immediately trust him with my design in it, yet I have a better opinion of his understanding, than to suppose he cou'd mistake it.

L. Fop. I am struck dumb with the deliberation of her assurance; and do not positively remember, that the *non-balance* of my temper ever had so bright an occasion to shew itself before.

L. Bet. My Lord, I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken with you.

L. Fop. O, madam, don't be under the confusion of an apology upon my account; for in cases of this nature I am never disappointed, but when I find a lady of the same mind two hours together———Madam, I have lost a thousand fine women in my time; but never had the ill manners to be out of humour with any one for refusing me, since I was born.

L. Bet. My Lord, that's a very prudent temper.

L. Fop. Madam, to convince you that I am in an universal peace with mankind, since you own I have so far contributed to your happiness, give me leave to have the honour of completing it, by joining your hand where you have already offer'd up your inclination.

L. Bet. My Lord, that's a favour I can't refuse you.

L. Mor. Generous indeed, my Lord.

[*L. Fop. joins their hands.*]

L. Fop. And stop my breath, if ever I was better pleas'd since my first entrance into human nature.

Sir Char. How now, my Lord! what! throw up the cards before you have lost the game?

L. Fop. Look you, *Charles*, 'tis true, I did design to have play'd with her alone: but he that will keep well with the Ladies, must sometimes be content to make one at a poole with 'em: and since I know I must engage her in my turn, I don't see any great odds in letting him take the first game with her.

Sir Char. Wisely consider'd, my Lord.

L. Bet. And now, *Sir Charles*——

Sir Char. And now, madam, I'll save you the trou-

ble of a long speech : and in one word confess that every thing I have done in regard to you this day was purely artificial — I saw, there was no way to secure you to my Lord *Morelove*, but by alarming your pride with the danger of losing him : and since the success must have by this time convinc'd you, that in love nothing is more ridiculous than an over-acted aversion ; I am sure you won't take it ill, if we at last congratulate your good nature, by heartily laughing at the fright we had put you in. Ha ! ha ! ha !

L. Easy. Ha ! ha ! ha !

L. Bet. Why — well, I declare it now, I hate you worse than ever.

Sir Char. Ha ! ha ! ha ! And was it afraid they wou'd take away its love from it — Poor Lady *Betty* ! ha ! ha !

L. Easy. My dear, I beg your pardon ; but 'tis impossible not to laugh when one's heartily pleas'd.

L. Fop. Really, madam, I am afraid the humour of the company will draw me into your displeasure too ; but if I were to expire this moment, my last breath wou'd positively go out with a laugh, Ha ! ha ! ha !

L. Bet. Nay, I have deserv'd it all, that's the truth on't—but I hope, my Lord, you were not in this design against me.

L. Mor. As a proof, madam, I am inclin'd never to deceive you more, — I do confess I had my share in't.

L. Bet. You do, my Lord — then I declare 'twas a design, one or other — the best carried on that ever I knew in my life ; and (to my shame I own it) for aught I know, the only thing that could have prevail'd upon my temper : 'twas a foolish pride that has cost me many a bitten lip to support it — I wish we don't both repent, my Lord.

L. Mor. Don't you repent without me, and we never shall.

Sir Char. Well, madam, now the worst that the world can say of your past conduct, is, that my Lord had constancy, and you have try'd it.

Enter a Servant to Lord Morelove.

Serv. My Lord, Mr. *Le Feuvre's* below, and desires to know what time your Lordship will please to have the music begin.

L. Mor. Sir Charles, what say you? will you give me leave to bring 'em hither?

Sir Char. As the Ladies think fit, my Lord.

L. Ber. O! by all means, 'twill be better here, unless we cou'd have the terrafs to ourselves.

L. Mor. Then, pray desire 'em to come hither immediately.

Serv. Yes, my Lord.

[Exit Serv.]

Enter Lady Graveairs.

Sir Char. Lady Graveairs!

L. *Grav.* Yes! you may well start! but don't suppose I am now come like a poor tame fool to upbraid your guilt; but, if I cou'd, to blast you with a look.

Sir *Char.* Come, come, you have sense,—don't expose yourself—you are unhappy, and I own myself the cause:—the only satisfaction I can offer you, is to protest no new engagement takes me from you; but a sincere reflection of the long neglect and injuries I have done the best of wives; for whose amends and only sake I now must part with you, and all the inconvenient pleasures of my life.

L. Grav. Have you then fallen into the low contempt of exposing me, and to your wife too?

Sir Char. 'Twas impossible, without it, I cou'd ever be sincere in my conversion.

L. Grav. Despicable !

Sir *Char.* Do not think so——for my sake I know she'll not reproach you——nor by her carriage, ever let the world perceive you've wrong'd her.——
My dear——

L. Easy. Lady Gravetairs, I hope you'll sup with us?

L. Grav. I can't refuse so much good company, madam.

Sir Char. You see the worst of her resentment—
In the mean time, don't endeavour to be her friend,
and she'll never be your enemy.

L. Grav. I am unfortunate—'tis what my folly has
deserv'd, and I submit to it.

L. Mor. So! here's the music.

L. Easy. Come, Ladies, shall we sit?

After the Music, a SONG.

S Abina with an Angel's Face,
By Love ordain'd for Joy,
Seems of the Sirens cruel Race,
To charm and then destroy.

*With all the Arts of Look and Dress,
She fans the fatal Fire;
Through Pride, mistaken oft for Grace,
She bids the Swains expire.*

*The God of Love enrag'd to see
The Nymph defy his Flame,
Pronounc'd his merciless Decree
Against the Haughty Dame;*

*Let Age with double Speed o'ertake her,
Let Love the Room of Pride supply;
And when the Lovers all forsake her,
A spotless Virgin let her die.*

Sir Charles comes forward with Lady Easy.

Sir Char. Now, my dear, I find my happiness grow
fast upon me; in all my past experience of the sex, I
found even among the better sort so much of folly,
pride, malice, passion, and irresolute desire, that I
concluded thee but of the foremost rank, and there-

fore scarce worthy my concern ; but thou hast stirr'd me with so severe a proof of thy exalted virtue, it gives me wonder equal to my love——If then the unkindly thought of what I have been, hereafter thou'd intrude upon thy growing quiet, let this reflection teach thee to be easy :

*Thy wrongs when greatest, most thy virtue prov'd ;
And from that virtue found, I blus'd and truly lov'd.*
[Exit.



E P I L O G U E.

Conquest and Freedom are at length our own,
False Fears of Slav'ry no more are shewn ;
Nor Dread of paying Tribute to a foreign Throne.
All Stations now the Fruits of Conquest share,
Except (if small with great Things may compare)
Th' oppress'd Condition of the lab'ring Player.
Wer're still in Fears (as you of late in France)
Of the Despotic Power of Song and Dance :
For while Subscription, like a Tyrant, reigns,
Nature's neglected, and the Stage in Chains,
And English Actors Slaves to swell the Frenchman's
Gains.

Like Æsop's Crow, the poor out-witted Stage,
That liv'd on wholesome Plays i' th' latter Age,
Deluded once to sing, ev'n justly serv'd,
Let fall her Cheese to the Fox Mouth and starv'd :
O that our Judgment, as our Courage has
Your Fame extended, wou'd assert our Cause,
That nothing English might submit to foreign Laws.

*If we but live to see that joyful Day,
Then of the English Stage, reviv'd we may,
As of your Honour now, with proper Application, say :*

*So when the Gallic Fox, by Fraud of Peace,
Had lull'd the British Lion into Ease,
And saw that Sleep compos'd his couchant Head,
He bids him wake, and see himself betray'd
In Toils of treacherous Politics around him laid :
Shews him how one close Hour of Gallic Thought
Retook those Towns for which he Years had fought.
At this th' indignant Savage rolls his fiery Eyes,
Dauntless, tho' blushing at the base Surprise,
Pauses a while—but finds Delays are vain :
Compell'd to fight, he shakes his shaggy Mane ;
He grinds his dreadful Fangs ; and stalks to Blenheim's
Plain.*

*There with erected Crest, and horrid Roar,
He furious plunges on through Streams of Gore,
And dyes with false Bavarian Blood the purple Danube's
Shore.*

*In one push'd Battle frees the destin'd Slaves ;
Revives old English Honour, and an Empire saves.*



T H E
R I V A L F O O L S.
A
C O M E D Y.



T H E

P R O L O G U E.

*FROM sprightly Fletcher's loose Confed'rate Muse,
The unfinish'd Hints of these light Scenes we chuse;
For with such careless Haste this Play was writ,
So unperus'd each Thought of started Wit;
Each Weapon of his Wit so lamely fought,
That 'twou'd as scanty on our Stage be thought,
As for a modern Belle my Grannam's Petticoat.
So that from th' Old we may with Justice say,
We scarce cou'd cull the Trimming of a Play.
All cou'd be made o't is but Deshalbille,
'Tis loosely light, a'l Falbala and Frille:
No Set-dress Morals form'd in't to affright you,
From the dear modish Follies that delight you.
Unblushing Vice in fairest Forms may lurk,
Nor fear the Smart of our keen Satire's Jerk:
Husbands and Wives to separate Joys may steal,
And mutual Rage their mutual Shame reveal;
Or more to top the Fashion, sin in private,
And mutual Guilt, their mutual Shame connive at:
The flaming Beau may rattle through the Streets,
And pay with Privilege the Tradesman's Debts;
While Spouse at home, whose Fondness has undone her,
Her Jewels pawns for Sharpers Debts of Honour:
Sharpers from Bubbles, too, Estates may find,
And keep the Coaches that they've rid behind:
Our Chiefs abroad may mount the Winter Trench,
While Grooms at home with Wagers back the French:
Parties 'gainst Parties too may strain the Laws,
And each pretend their Country is their Cause;
When, if their Murmurings secret Spring you trace,
'Tis who enjoys, not who acts wrong in place;
For when disputed Profit's not i' th' way,
You see how nicely Points are lost by th' Opera.*

P R O L O G U E.

*No, faith! All sorts of Men and Manners may
 From these last Scenes go unreprou'd away.
 From late Experience taught, we slight th' old Rule
 Of Profit with Delight: This Play's—All Fool!
 So clear of Sense, and garnish'd with Grimace,
 That wisely it depends for its Success
 On dangling Bullock's Grin, and Pinky's Face.
 But if their bumble Jests should fail to win ye,
 We beg some Grace for Signior Cihberini.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

*Sir Oliver Outwit,
 Young Outwit,
 Cunningham,
 Sir Gregory Goofs,
 Samuel Simple,
 Sir Threadbare Gentry,
 Priscian,*

*Mr. Pinkethman,
 Mr. Wilks.
 Mr. Booth.
 Mr. Bullock.
 Mr. Cibber.
 Mr. Pack.
 Mr. Keene,*

W O M E N.

*Lucinda, Niece to Sir Oliver,
 Mirabel,
 Governess,
 Lady Gentry,*

*Mrs. Oldfeld.
 Mrs. Porter.
 Mrs. Willis.
 Mrs. Finch.*

T H E

R I V A L F O O L S.

A C T I.

SCENE, *Sir Oliver's House.*

Enter Sir Oliver Outwit, and Y. Outwit.

Y. Out. **S**IR, I'm no boy, I have been at age this half-year.

Sir Ol. Why then, Sir, you have been fit to live by your wits these two years.

Y. Out. Wits, fir!

Sir Ol. Wits, fir! ay, Wits, fir! and a very good allowance too; I shall be sorry to find I have spent my time in getting a Fool; thou know'st all I have was got by my Wits. And canst thou own thyself so degenerate, as to tell me thou want'st money at thy years? Why, I never offered to tell my father so from a school-boy.

Y. Out. You had very good luck sure, fir; pray, how did you live?

Sir Ol. Why, as a gentleman should live, by my Wits, fir.

Y. Out. There are indeed a great many such gentlemen about the world, fir; but men of honour and fortune call 'em sharpers and scoundrels.

Sir Ol. 'Pshah! some few rich fools that have paid for their experience of good company may rail at 'em perhaps; (losers must have leave to speak, you know :) but we that are wiser, know the use and value of an ingenious man.

Y. Out. Well, sir, since you own you have made a plentiful estate of your ingenuity, I hope you will let your posterity be the better for't.

Sir Ol. Ay, ay, that I will; why thou shalt have my very original receipt to make such another fortune by.

Y. Out. Pray let's hear it, sir.

Sir Ol. Why, sir, I had no sooner brush'd into the world, but the first degree I took in thriving, was to lay close intelligence for wenching; cou'd give this Lord, or that rich Citizen, a true catalogue of all the maidenheads between *Charing-Cross* and *Albany*; how many lay amongst chambermaids; how many in the *Exchange* (tho' very few there, I must confess); and how many at the boarding-school.

Y. Out. But, sir, ——— in our age this is called pimping.

Sir Ol. Sirrah! I got many a round sum by it, when my father would not give me a groat ——— Then, sir, I was in with all the top gamesters; and when there was a fat Squire to be fleec'd, I had my office among them too; and tho' I say it, was one of the neatest operators about town.

Y. Out. Why, this was turning downright sharper, sir.

Sir Ol. Turning a penny, sirrah! I liv'd! I liv'd! did not I live, Fool? I builed, I stirred, I was as busy as a bee, had all the world to rove in, and cull'd a maintenance from every flower. Traverse, make honey, sirrah! and when you've tasted it, confess with me, that stolen sweets are best.

Y. Out. And was this your course of life, sir?

Sir Ol. 'Till I grew old and purfy, and then I grew in men's opinions too, and confidence; then they begun to put things call'd Executorships upon me, the

charge of orphans, little harmless animals; that I chuck'd under the chin, and bound out to felt-makers and fish-mongers, to make 'em lose and work away their gentry, disguis'd their tender natures with hard custom; and so in time brought 'em to an utter ignorance of what they were born to.

Y. Out. Well, sir, suppose I should get leave of my conscience to resolve upon this course of life, what security have you, that I shall not make ev'n you the first example of my ingenuity?

Sir Ol. Ah! do that, and thou'lt win my heart for ever: No, no, that were too great a comfort to expect thou should'st gull me! Alas! I'm a great way out of thy depth; I can't hope for that blessing these three years.

Y. Out. Since you provoke me, I'll try in two hours, for all that. [*Aside.*] You'll part with nothing then at present, sir?

Sir Ol. Not a single tester.

Y. Out. If a man shou'd ask your blessing, sir, in this humour, I suppose you'd refuse him.

Sir Ol. Let me but hear thou livest by thy Wits once, and thou shalt make thy own terms with me. Let me first have a proof, that if I shou'd give thee land, thou hast Wit enough to keep it: if not, thou art no Son of mine——Then prithee why shou'd I support thee? And now thou know'st my humour——Vanish, vanish,——and never let me see that uncomfortable face of thine, till thou can'st shew me a shilling of thy own getting.

Y. Out. Sir, I'll endeavour to deserve your good opinion.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Ol. The sooner, sir, the better——Ah! if one cou'd but recall youth again, what a sweet penny might a man make of his experience! But I'm too old now, and reduc'd, I fear, to the last ingenious exploit I shall ever be able to go through with: if I can marry my niece to *Sir Gregory Goose*, and by that means secure one fourth of her fortune to my own use, which he has compounded for; I'll e'en shake hands

with the world; give over business; and when I can cheat no longer, turn honest, and fall fast asleep in my great chair.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Sir Gregory Goose desires to speak with you.

Sir O! Shew him up, I'll wait upon him in an instant. *[Exit.]*

Enter Sir Gregory Goose, and Cunningham.

Sir Greg. Well, dear Cunningham! I wish I may never laugh again, if thou art not the pleasantest companion that ever gentleman took a fancy to—Pr'ythee go on with thy story, for I durst lay my life thou wipest this foolish knight's nose of his mistress at last. Pr'ythee go on.

Cun. Did ever gudgeon bite so greedily? And so, sir, as I told you, finding myself desperately in love with this Lady, and ten thousand times more so, when I heard she was to be married to another; I saw at last there was no hope of my ever speaking a word to her, but by even tackling myself as a miserable companion to the impertinent coxcomb, that I knew was design'd for her husband.

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! Well, I swear that was so archly contriv'd! What! and so this coxcomby fool of a rival took thee along with him to visit her! Ha! ha! ha!

Cun. I vow, Sir Gregory, your apprehension is so quick, there's no surprising you with any thing.

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! I knew I should smother the jest; but that senseless rogue of a rival, that could think a man of thy ingenuity would keep company with a fool for nothing.

Cun. Right, sir; but if there were no Fools, you know, half the Wits of the world would be starv'd.

Sir Greg. Faith! and that's true again; and therefore,

what a comfort it is when we ingenious men take a friendly care of one another——But here comes, the old knight my uncle-in-law.

Enter Sir Oliver.

Sir Ol. *Sir Gregory Goose*, I am your most humble servant : is this gentleman your friend, sir ?

Sir Greg. I am his friend, *Sir Oliver*, and that's much at one, you know.

Sir Ol. Sir, he's welcome——May I crave his name ?

Sir Greg. Young *Cunningham*, a *Norfolk* gentleman, one that has lived among our family of the *Geese* ever since I can't tell how long ; we all strive to have him. Between you and I, sir, he's such a devilish pleasant cur of a Wit, that some of our name have gone to law for him——and now it happens to be my turn to have him : not but, as most Wits are, he's consumed chargeable, tho' I can't part with him when I have a mind to it : I only use him at present by way of giving myself an air or so, till my marriage is over, and then I'll have nothing to do with wit as long as I live.——Well, but where's this niece of yours, old uncle-in-law, that shall be ? When will she be visible !——for you don't suppose I'll buy a pig in a poke, sure. Pr'ythee let's ogle her a bit.

Sir Ol. You'll pardon my caution, sir, she has been us'd to restraint ; had she been easy to be seen, perhaps you had never seen her ; there's many a beggarly thing call'd An't like your Honour, many a poor Lord that lies in wait for her, and then slap, at the first dash she's a Countess, and undone ; it has been many a poor young woman's misfortune ! This whets him to her. [*Aside.*]

Sir Greg. O law ! What, is she so cruel handsome then ? Dear sir, pray let's clap up the wedding immediately : are you sure she's not stolen already ?——Hark ! hark !

Sir Ol. What's the matter ?

Sir Greg. Every coach that goes by, as I'm alive,

goes to the heart of me : are you sure she's in the house, fir ?

Sir Ol. That doubt, fir, shall be eas'd immediately. — Who's there ? Desire my niece to walk hither — And now I think on't, Sir Gregory, you shall give her a taste of your wit before you see her ; we'll have a little sport with her.

Sir Greg. O dear, how, pray ? Pray let's have it, for I love sport cruelly.

Sir Ol. Why thus, fir ; when my niece comes in, you shall hide yourself behind the arras, and I'll present your friend to her in your stead, if your friend will do us the favour to stand for you.

Sir Greg. 'Phah ! He shall stand for any thing ; why his supper lies in my breeches here ; by this light, he shall fast else.

Sir Ol. Then, fir, when he has spoken the Prologue to your love, up flies the curtain, and out start you, the very Play itself ; how will she be dazzled then ! how will she blush, and frown, and smile again, then laugh, and own herself to be wooed, and won victoriously !

Sir Greg. Well ! I'll say it, this will be the curiousest fun in the world.

Sir Ol. Hift ! Here she comes — — — To your post, fir.

Sir Greg. O la ! Now shall I bite my lips through for fear of laughing. [Exit.

Sir Ol. I am given to understand you are a Wit, fir.

Cun. I am one that fortune shews but small favour to, fir.

Sir Ol. Good — — — And to tell you the truth, I am taken with a Wit, fir.

Cun. Fowlers catch woodcocks so : don't shew a Wit your weak side, fir.

Sir Ol. Ha ! a smart fellow, faith — he'ad rather lose his dinner than his jest — I say, fir, I love a Wit the best of all things.

Cun. Always except yourself, fir.

Sir Ol. Hah ! he has bobbed me twice now ; all in a

breath. But here comes my niece—you know your business with her.

Cun. With a woman, sir! 'tis e'en the very same it was five thousand years ago; no fool can miss it.

Sir Ol. Mum.

Enter Niece and Governess.

Niece, you must give me leave to recommend this gentleman to your affection.

Cun. Don't mock me, *Fortune*. [*Aside.*

Sir Ol. How do you like him?—Hum, hum.

[*Laughs. Aside.*

Niece. What means this riddle, *Cunningham*? [*Aside.*] As he is your choice, sir, I can't but give him welcome.

Sir Ol. To her, to her, man—Ha! ha!

Cun. I hope, madam, your good-nature will put a right construction on this attempt to see you, tho' had I time to tell you how, you'd find it more my *Fortune's* doing than my forwardness.

Niece. I must humour this, to find the rise on't. [*Aside.*] As you are my uncle's choice, sir, I give you a sincere and hearty welcome: what he commands me, I shall ever chearfully obey.

Cun. You heard he did command you.

Sir Ol. Ha! ha! the rogue does it rarely.

Niece. And therefore, sir, I yield my hand——

Cun. Your lips—— [*Kissing her.*

Niece. And may in time my heart. [*Kisses her hand.*

Sir Ol. Hold, hold, sir, your part goes a little too far——not so feelingly.

Cun. My joys are mockeries——doubly so, I fear; for all she said might be as well the act of her obedience as real inclination——If she has love, I have a thought will search it. [*Aside.*

Sir Ol. Ha! ha! Well, Niece, and so you really think him a very pretty fellow?

Niece. Sir, from my heart I thank you for him: had

my own eyes been set at liberty to make a public choice, it cou'd not have done more to please my heart, than your indulgence has.

Sir Ol. Nay then, girl, what wilt thou say, when I shew thee him I've really chosen — Alas ! poor Niece ! this is but the scabbard of the man I mean for thee ; but now I draw the shining blade shall glitter in thy eyes, and pierce thee thro'.

Niece. What mean you, sir ?

Sir Ol. What, ho ! Sir Gregory ! Approach, my lad of thousands.

Enter Sir Gregory, strutting.

Sir Greg. Who calls me ?

Niece. What motion's this ! What limber-jointed baby ! Why he moves by wires, sir ! a mere wooden-tumbler ! I have seen children play with such.

Sir Ol. Don't be a fool ; I tell you this is the gentleman.

Niece. This ! Fie, sir ! When I was a girl, you us'd to bring me home a prettier husband than this upon the outside of a sugar-cake.

Sir Ol. Is the devil in thee ? — Speak to her, Sir Gregory.

Sir Greg. Ay, now you shall see, I'll fetch her about presently. Madam, f——l——

Niece. Wou'd you speak with me, sir ?

Sir Greg. Speak with you, sir !

Niece. Have you any thing to say, sir ?

Sir Greg. Hoity-toity ! You are so snap, and so short, forsooth : why what a duce do people use to speak to folks, and have nothing to say to 'em ?

Niece. Nay, there are such fools, sir ; but perhaps you are of another sort : but, however, let me hear what you have to say, and if I don't give you a very particular odd sort of an answer, say I am no woman : come, come, let's hear what you have to say ?

Sir Greg. Bibble-babble, why your tongue runs so fast, madam, that you won't let me put in a syllable.

Niece. Who I, sir? I am dumb.

Sir Greg. Why then I say, madam——

Niece. I know what you wou'd say, sir——

Sir Greg. What the devil! before I open my mouth!

Niece. Why then, sir, to please you, I do not know what you wou'd say.

Sir Greg. Very well! Why then I say, that a——
Fgad I don't know what I was going to say myself now.

Sir Ol. Don't provoke me, huffy, for once more I tell you this is the gentleman.

Niece. O pray, sir, don't impose on me so grossly: this is the man, I'm sure, you really mean for me.

Sir Ol. Oons! you won't persuade me out of my senses, will you?

Cun. Now to try her home. [*Aside.*

Niece. Look you, uncle, I will allow you have wit, and managa a jest as well as any man of your years; but when an humour grows stale, you know, you should really give it over.

Sir Ol. What the devil shall I do with her?

Cun. [*To the Gov.*] I never saw comeliness and good-humour join'd before.

Gov. Nay, dear, sweet sir, how can you offer these words to an old gentlewoman?

Niece. Sir, if you are not busy—— [*To Cun.*

Gov. Why, how now, boldface! Is that your manners to interrupt a gentleman when he's private?

Niece. Sir——

Cun. Away fifteen, here's fifty-one's worth fifteen hundred of thee.

Gov. Why, get you gone, I say——These giddy girls are so vain, there's no giving 'em a reasonable answer.

Cun. Ay, ay, give me years and understanding; the impertinence of youth's intolerable: come, come, ne'er disguise it, I know you are a teeming woman yet.

Gov. Ay, in troth, a handsome young gentleman might do much, I think, sir.

Cun. Did not I tell you so?

Gov. And I shou'd play my part, I believe, or I were ungrateful.

Niece. This neglect's intolerable. [*Afide.*] I will move him or remove him——Sir——

Cun. Your pardon, madam,——I'm really a little busy.

Niece. Insolent————If I am not even with him——

Sir Ol. Why, did not I tell thee, child, this was none of thy gentleman——Now we have nettled the baggage.

Sir Greg. Ay, madam, was not you told before, that I was the person that you were to set your heart upon?

Niece. Sir, let me ask a thousand pardons. 'Twas the error of my obedience, not my judgment. Pray, let me view the gentleman nearer, uncle; I scarce have seen him yet; I only humm'd him over at first, as lawyers do a bill in *Chancery*. Where were my eyes! upon life, a handsome gentleman: agreeable, now I distinctly read him.

Sir Greg. [*Strutting.*] Tum, tum. [*Sings.*

Niece. Say he be a little too shambling in his gait, a dancing-master will soon bring that to an easy negligence, that all your fine gentlemen are so fond of: well dress'd, strait limbs, and two manly calves, (if they are but his own) that look as if they wou'd not shrink at the ninth child.

Sir Greg. Tum, tum, dum.

Niece. A voice too, surprising!

Sir Greg. Tum, tum, dum.

[*London.*

Niece. Where was my judgment?

Sir Greg. Tum, tum, dum.

Niece. Well, I shall be the happiest woman breathing. Pray, sir, make my peace with him: I am under all the confusion in the world, to think I cou'd receive him so rudely.

Sir Ol. D'ye hear, *Sir Greg*? D'ye hear? D'ye hear? all's over; she begs your pardon. Stick to her;

close, close, you wag, and don't give her a moment's time to cool again.

Cun. [*Aside.*] Confusion! but to shew myself concern'd might ruin me.

Sir Greg. Madam, I am the very humblest of your foot-balls; and I wish I may never be married, madam, if I am not sorry for your sorrow: but if ever I trust that old gentleman's wit, to play the fool with any mistress of mine again, I'll give you leave to call me a *Rhinoceros*. And now we are friends, madam, let's e'en join hands, and revenge ourselves upon that rogue *Cunningham*, that had like to have set us together by the ears: I'll spoil his market with the old gentleman, I warrant you.

Niece. With all my heart, fir.

Sir Ol. Well, fir, do you thrive? How goes your suit forward?

Cun. Softly and fairly, fir,—I'm taking measure for the widow's mind, and hope to fit a man to it shortly.

Gov. Who wou'd have dreamt of a young morsel at this time of day? To see how unlook'd-for things will happen!

Sir Greg. Widow, don't trust him; widow, he's a younger brother; he will swear and lye like a *French Gazette*; he has not one shilling in the world, and lives upon his impudence, like an *Observer*.

Gov. And I tell you, fir, he brings more content to a woman with that nothing, than he that brings his thousands with a false heart.

Niece. Give you joy of your good fortune, fir. Ha! ha!

Sir Ol. And pray, fir, make my house your own; I see you are a man of wit, fir, and I honour you.

Cun. Sir, I thank you—Come, widow, now,

To closer converse let's retire,

And rake the embers of desire.

[*Exeunt.*]

Niece. So! he is resolved to stand it, I see.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Y. Outwit, Sir Threadbare Gentry, and Priscian.

Y. Out. Are we all fit ?

Sir Thr. To a hair, sir.

Y. Out. Are you perfect, Doctor Priscian ?

Pris. *Ad unguem, domine.*

Y. Out. Very well ; but will your conscience bate nothing, say you, of a whole share for your wife, while she does nothing for't ?

Sir Thr. Look you, sir, my wife's ready, had she been called ; and, like a soldier, expects her pay, whether she fights or not.

Pris. Faith for these five years, *Ego possum probare*, I have had a hungry starving share with 'em, and she has always had an equal share with me.

Y. Out. What ! present, or not present ?

Pris. *Residens, aut non residens, per fidem.*

Y. Out. Pr'ythee, my dear *Propria quæ maribus*, hold : your tongue, or I'll depose you from half your share presently : Tho' your *hic & hæc turpis, & Qui mihi discipulus* brains, (that never got any thing but by Accident and uncertainty) allow'd her share, must I do it, that bring you grounded conclusions of wit ; hereditary rules for my father to get by.

Sir Thr. Sir, if you talk till Doomsday, my wife must have her share.

Y. Out. The rogues find I can't do without 'em, and I must comply.

Sir Thr. Are you content ?

Y. Out. I must be, it seems ————Odso ! here comes my father. Priscian, you begin first ; take care you don't blunder now, for he has some ends of *Latin*, I can tell you ———— but don't fear him ! If I find you are stuck, I'll pop in to relieve you.

Enter Sir Oliver, and Sir Gregory.

Sir Ol. Pshaw, *Nephew!* (for so I'll venture to call you now) if you have met with no greater discouragement than what you mention, your business is done, sir; she's your own.

Sir Greg. Faith, sir, I told you the worst; for I put her fairly to't, and felt her as far as I durst, and her strongest repulse was, that she said she wish'd there were a little more of the soldier in me, that, upon occasion, I might have courage enough to beat a rascal, for putting her into a lampoon, or so.

Sir Ol. O that's but reasonable——Why, you are strong enough to break a head, I believe.

Sir Greg. Why, faith, I believe I cou'd, if a fellow were to stand fair, and I were pretty sure he wou'd not strike again.

Sir Ol. Can't you practise a little upon a tavern-drawer, or a box-keeper at the play-house?

Sir Greg. O no! hang 'em, they are such silver-tongu'd rogues, there's no fixing a single saucy word upon 'em; but if courage were to be sold, I'm sure I have a heart that wou'd give as much for't as e'er a gentleman that blows.

Sir Ol. Breathes, breathes, that's the proper phrase, Sir.

Sir Greg. Blows, I say, blows for a soldier, sir——

Sir Ol. Ay, for a soldier, I grant you.

Sir Greg. 'Slid! I'll swallow a whole bushel of bullets, and good round ones too, but I'll have something of the soldier in me.

Sir Thr. Will you on and beg, or steal and be hang'd?

Sir Greg. A little of the scholar too, she hinted; but I told her learning was not a thing for a gentleman to trouble his head about.

Pris. *Salvete Domini benignissimi, munificentissimi.*

Sir Ol. *Salvete dicis ad nos?——Jubeo te salvere.* Nay, sir, we have *Latin* in us, and other metal too; Now, sir, you shall see me talk with this fellow.

Sir Greg. 'Ad! I cou'd find in my heart to talk with him too, if I cou'd but understand him.

Pris. *Charissimi doctissimique domini, ex abundantia caritatis vestrae, estote propitii in me jejunum, pauperem, miserum, & omni consolatione exulem.*

Sir Ol. Upon my faith, fir, a very deep scholar! but I'll to him again.

Sir Greg. Pray, fir, does he beg or steal this language? or what? Why he may call one fool, for aught I know, and a man never the wiser.

Sir Ol. He begs, he begs, fir.

Pris. *Ecce domine; ecce in oculis lacrymarum flumen, in ore fames, sitisque, & in omni parte necessitas & indigentia.*

Sir Ol. *Audi tu bonus socius: tu es scholasticus, sic intelligo. Ego faciam argumentum*—Now mind, fir, now I'll fetch him up, you shall see—A hum, a hum!

Sir Greg. Well, I have been fetch'd up an hundred times for this, and yet cou'd never learn half so much.

Sir Ol. *Audi, & responde; hoc est argumentum! Nomen est nomen, ergo, Quod est tibi nomen? Responde nunc*—Hum, hum—*Responde Argumentum meum.*

Now I put him to't, fir.

Y. Out. [*Peeping.*] Step in, step in, the rascal's out of his penn'd speech, and can go no farther.

Sir Ol. *Cur non respondes, domine?*

Pris. *Ob! Domine, tanta mea est miseria.*

Y. Out. O! he's in again,

Pris. *Ut nocte mecum pernoctat egestas, luce quotidie paupertas habitat.*

Sir Ol. *Sed quod est tibi nomen? & quis dedit, responde argumentum?*

Pris. A hem, a hem!

Y. Out. He's dry, he hems again, on quickly.

Enter Sir Threadbare.

Sir Tbr. Courteous gentlemen, if the brow of a military face may not be offensive to your generous eye-balls, let his wounds speak better than his words, for some

small branch, or the least sprig of charity to be planted upon this poor barren soil of a soldier.

Sir Ol. Why, how now! What, arms and arts both go a-begging?

Sir Greg. Pray, let me give 'em something, and be gone; for if any dispute should happen among us, I am able to answer neither of 'em: for this iron and steel tongue of his is full as crabbed to me as t'other's *Latin*.

Sir Ol. Stay, stay, sir, I'll talk with 'em a little first: let me alone with 'em, I'll examine both, I'll try whether they live by their wits or no.

Sir Greg. Ay! if starving be living, you may see they do.

Sir Ol. And what? Do you both beg together then?

Pris. Conjunctis manibus profecto, domine.

Sir Thr. With equal fortunes, Sir, equal distribution, there's not the breadth of a sword's point uneven in our division.

Sir Greg. Well! to see what two rich qualities are here, cast away upon two poor fellows! 'ad I warrant if a man cou'd buy these creatures now, and might but kill 'em, and boil 'em down to a jelly, and take a porringer of 'em fasting every morning, they wou'd so strengthen one's understanding, that in a month's time one might be fit for a bishop, or a general.

Sir Ol. Come, sir, join your charity with mine, and we'll make 'em up a couple of pence between us.

Sir Greg. Why, if a man cou'd but have a Penny-worth for his penny, I did not care how much I laid out with 'em.

Y. Out. Save you, gentlemen! These beggars are so troublesome there's no passing the streets for 'em.

Sir Thr. Generous sir, do not despise our misery; we were not born to beg!

Pris. Ante obitum felix nemo, supremaque Fata.

Y. Out. Pray, gentlemen, what are they?

Sir Ol. Faith, sir, as you see, *Mars* and *Mercury*; a couple of poor planets that *Jupiter* has turn'd out of t heir

sphere to live by their wits, and we were just about a spark of charity to kindle 'em a new fire.

Y. Out. Hold, sir! not but I commend your design, but wou'd not have your charity abus'd by the undeserving. Which is he that professes the soldier?

Sir Ol. He, sir, that has liv'd to shame the world with his profession, witness the dangerous and unrewarded life he has led in it these pair of half score years.

Y. Out. In what service have you been?—You'll pardon my interruption, gentlemen.

Sir Ol. Pray go on, sir——you seem to understand 'em.

Sir Tbr. The first service, sir, that flusht me a soldier, was that memorable battle at *Alcazar in Barbary*, where the noble *English Sturdy* fell; and where that royal *Portuguese Sebastian* ended his life.

Y. Out. Um! This can be no counterfeit.

Sir Ol. I don't think you'll find him one, sir.

Y. Out. But, sir, methinks you don't shew the marks of a soldier! Have you brought home no scars to be your chronicle?

Sir Tbr. Sir, I have wounds, and many, but in those parts where nature and humanity bid me blush to expose 'em.

Y. Out. Come, sir, I'll try your scholar too; I'll see if he has learning enough to deserve his being poor——You have the languages, I presume, sir; I mean the chief, as Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Latin, and so forth.

Prisf. *Aliquantulum non totaliter, domine.*

Sir Ol. Nay, Sir, I have try'd him deep in the *Eatin*, and indeed find him very well grounded——very well grounded.

Y. Out. Then, sir, I'll touch him a little in the *Greek*.
Toia Miois Fatherois Oldfooleros Afinisoy.

Prisf. *Kai Yonkeros filligous Bambooslomenos.*

Y. Out. *Cheateron ton biton?*

Prisf. *Tous Pollous Purfas Pickpockettos.*

Y. Out. Upon my credit, fir, a very great master of the Greek.

Sir Ol. Why, I see it, fir.—There's a bottom in him; the man's deep.

Y. Out. I'll only trouble your patience with a little Syriac, fir—and then.

Sir Ol. O pray, Sir—

Y. Out. *Kircom shag a deu matbell bedash Bragmen.*

Pris. *Hafbagath, Rabgabsb shobeth, Onoriadka.*

Y. Out. *Colpack, Rubasca, gnawerthem shigshag.*

Pris. *Napshamothen, Ribse, Bongomosh Cathmech Nagoshi.*

Y. Out. Gentlemen, I have done; if any man can go farther, I confess myself at a *nonplus*.

Sir Greg. Not I, faith, fir, I was at my top in honest old English, I was never double-tongu'd, I thank my hard fortune.

Y. Out. Faith, gentlemen, 'tis pity [stand away a little, friend] I say, 'tis pity fellows so endow'd, so qualified with the gifts of nature and arts, shou'd have such a scarcity of fortune's benefits; is it not a reproach, think you, a shame to this iron-hearted age?

Sir Ol. 'Tis so indeed, and a thousand pities men of their parts shou'd want. When I do a thing, I love to do it handsomely—Come, fir, here's my groat.

Y. Out. For what, fir?

Sir Ol. Sir, I love to see merit rewarded:

Y. Out. With a groat, fir? O! give em nothing, a thousand times rather give em nothing: For my part, I own their misfortunes have touch'd me deeper, and tho' I have little but my wits to live by—Here, friends, here's half I have in the world for you; four angels to guide you to your lodgings; a poor gentleman's goodwill at least.

Pris. *Ah! Gratias, benignissime domine, gratias quantas possum maximas habeo.* [Seems to weep.]

Sir Ol. Sir Greg. This is but an indifferent example for us.

Y. Out. Let me not live if the very joy of their relief does not draw the tears into their manly eyes! I

can't bear the shock—Here, gentlemen, there's the rest for you; take purse and all, I'm sorry 'tis not full to serve you.

Sir Ol. We shall be undone! Now where's my wit?

Sir Greg. Puh! Pox of Wit! when a gentleman has money; there, you ingenious curs you, there's the devil and all for you—Come, come, Sir Nunkle, down with your dust—I have given 'em five pieces.

Sir Ol. Why, then there's as many—I know the value of a man of wit.

Sir Tbr. May soldiers ever defend such charities.

Pris. And scholars pray for their increase.

Sir Ol. They may pray for you, fir, you have mended the scholars commons to-day, I believe—But hark you, fir, you said you liv'd by your wits: I can tell you if you are often troubled with these fits of bounty, you'll starve your understanding.

Y. Out. I can't think so, fir; the seed of virtue never wants its harvest—Gentlemen, your humble servant. [Ex. Y. Out.

Sir Greg. Faith, fir, I only gave mine to give myself an air—For between you and I, a man had as good light of a reasonable thief, as a beggar of unreasonable misery.

Re-enter Y. Outwit.

Odfo! Here comes the gentleman again, and I fancy 'tis to beg his half back again.

Sir Ol. Like enough! Sharp's the word! we'll have half ours too.

Y. Out. D'ye hear, friends—I must beg your pardon, here's a small gold crown, that lay conceal'd in my fob, that I had like to have wrong'd you of—but now you have all, I can assure you.

Sir Ol. A hum! hum! Brush off, brush off, this fellow's bewitch'd.

Sir Greg. O filly, shallow-brain'd cur!

[*Exeunt Sir Oliver and Sir Gregory.*

Sir Tbr. So, here's ten pieces for a breakfast, boys!

Y. Out. Pshaw! a trifle! a by-blow, only for mirth's sake! But we must have better purchase, lads! Now I want a fourth person for another project that I have ripen'd.

Sir Tbr. My wife's your man, sir.

Y. Out. Have you any breeches for her?

Pris. Sir, she has worn nothing else since she was married, I can witness, figuratively speaking.

Sir Tbr. Hold your peace, Trope—But to speak truth, she does not fear the crack of a pistol; dares say stand to a grazier.

Pris. *Probatum fuit profecto, domine.*

Y. Out. Good! Let her be at the rendezvous in her masculine gender. My father has a young nephew coming up from the university, whom he designs for orders, Easy Master *Credulous Outwit*—We'll meet him at the town's end

Sir Tbr. And rob him——

Y. Out. No; but he shall rob one of us, and that shall rob my father of an hundred pieces to bring him off, and make him thank me for taking so little: for there's the ambition of my wit, to live upon his profest wit, that has turn'd me out to live by my wits.

Pris. *Cum hirundinis alis tibi regratulo.*

Y. Out. A man's habit, a sham bag of a hundred pound, the hour, the place, the action, shall be at night agreed on. And now, my wise father, you shall find I'll put my slender portion out to interest; foil you even at your own weapon.

*And to confirm yourself in me renate,
I'll prove at least my wit's legitimacy.*

[*Exeunt.*]



A C T H.

SCENE, Sir Oliver's House.

Enter Cunningham alone.

Cun. WAS ever man so fairly caught in a trap of his own baiting? No provok'd wasp can be more troublesome than this old stump of a woman I have drawn after me; I thought to have made her my stalking-mare to *Lucinda*, and instead of that the hag has clapt a bit in my mouth, and rides me like a post-horse, and 'tis impossible to throw her; she sticks as close as a saddle—I had no way to get a minute out of her company, but by telling her I was troubled with a diabetes. O! the devil——

Enter Governor.

Gov. Why, how now, sweeting,——What, a whole half-hour from me? A young man shoud think every minute a month in love.

Cun. Why, so I do, my bird——while I am in your curfed company. [*Aside.*]

Gov. Eh! bird! eh! if thou'lt be rul'd, I'll build thee a comfortable (*smickering*) nest, that will stand all storms; you shan't need to fear a weather-wreck of your fortune; and one day it may be youngling season too, and then I hope to have thee always near me.

Cun. A pox of your passion!——But hark you, sweeting! Prithee tell me, has my good friend, sir Gregory, any hopes of succeeding with his mistress *Lucinda*?

Gov. No, by my faith, has not he, if you'll take my word for't; setting his Worship aside, in my mind, he looks like a fool.

Cun. Nay, faith, ne'er divide 'em for that matter, Fool and Worship are no such strangers now-a-days; but my meaning is, does she give any hearty encouragement? ——— To be plain, have they as fair hopes of one another, as (*Cupid* bless us!) we have?

Gov. Troth, I do not perceive any such great forwardness in her! He offer'd to kiss her to-day, and she laid him over the face with her fan, and made his eyes water bitterly——tho' I wish your friend, the knight, better for your sake.

Cun. Why, I thank you, bird——and cou'd wish with all my heart, he were as strongly sure of her, as thou art of having me. [*Chucking her chin.*]

Gov. Eh! if thou didst but speak thy heart now! eh! he shou'd speed ne'er the worse for't. And I'll tell you, bird, (for we'll have no separate secrets now) Mrs. *Lucinda*, my charge, thinks well of you.

Cun. Of me! For what, prithee?

Gov. Why a———for my sake, child; she knows of your good-will to me, and therefore, upon that account, honey has taken a liking to thee; when we get into a house of our own, love, she'll give us a bit of stuff, I believe; and if ever she lives to be gossip, the babe sha'n't warrant a coral, she says.

Cun. The babe, quotha! It will be a hopeful mandrake, without doubt, that springs from our conjunction. [*Aside.*]

Gov. Ah! she designs such things for thee, if I durst but speak.

Cun. Nay, don't doubt my secrecy; tell me.

Gov. Oh, fye! you must not make me tell what women say behind men's backs, child.

Cun. O! you must give me leave at least to give her thanks for't.

Gov. No, no, that's my part; for you must consider what she does for you is only for my sake.

Cun. This is excellent!

[*Aside.*]

Gov. If you shou'd tell all that I open to you, you'll shame us both; you may kiss your hand to her at a distance, and blush, or so, but I'll allow no nearer conference.

Cun. Hey-dey! you'd be jealous then!

Gov. Jealous! marry, and there's no true love without it; look you, if you'll be rul'd, and not make things common, in time I may tell you more.

Cun. Udsó! your lady! she'll see us.

Gov. Pshaw! no matter, she'll be pleas'd with it — our familiarity is her content.

Enter Niece and Simple.

Niece. This from sir Gregory, sir?

Sim. Yes, madam — She's a very pretty creature.

[Aside.]

Niece. Do you belong to him, sir?

Sim. Yes, madam — a-hem! she's a fine woman, indeed.

[Aside.]

Niece. Pray, sir, in what capacity? — How the fellow eyes me!

[Aside.]

Sim. Madam, I am but his gentleman — a-hem!

[Sets himself.]

Niece. And pray, Sir, what might be his conceit in sending me this wrought handkerchief? — Still so close!

[Aside. Seeing Cun. and Gov.]

Sim. His conceit, madam, was, that as that happy handkerchief enfolds your snowy neck all day, so he desires all night to embrace it with his knightly arms — a-hem!

Niece. A notable conceit, I promise you.

Sim. Madam, he has been cudgelling his brains these two hours, to find a present worthy your ladyship's acceptance — Madam, he was once sending a very fine puppy to you.

Niece. That he might have brought himself — Ha! he seems to observe me! This fellow may be of use — I'll fit you, sir.

[Aside.]

Gov. Pray mind me, honey! You do nothing but stare upon her, I think.

Can. No, indeed, I was only observing that finical coxcomb, that fool yonder.

Gov. Don't tell me! what need you look upon the fool, when I'm here?

Can. How familiar the rascal is? [*Aside.*

Sim. By the world, I believe she likes me! [*Aside.*

Niece. Come, come, ne'er disguise it! This present was above your master's fancy, I know it; your wit had a hand in't, I'm positive.

Sim. O pray, madam. [*Affecting a blush.*

Niece. Nay, nay, I must know.

Sim. Oh! O la! Since you must know then, madam, pray give me leave to ask, why your ladyship asks, and you shall know.

Niece. Nay, if it be your master's, I'm sorry for't, that's all.

Sim. Nay, then don't be uneasy, dear madam—it was mine.

Niece. Well! it's extremely pretty! I may depend upon't as yours, sir.

Sim. I wish I may perish, madam, if Sir Gregory (for master I'll call him no more, if I cou'd have the honour to serve your ladyship) had the least hand in it.

Niece. Then I am easy—Pray, sir, tie it on for me.—Bless me! how white a hand you have.

Sim. O, dear madam, and your ladyship's neck so near, I am assur'd you shou'd look upon't.

Niece. You certainly use art with it.

Sim. Nothing but almond-powder, as I am a living creature, madam.

Niece. Pray, sir, what's your name?

Sim. Samuel Simple, madam.

Niece. Simple, what an innocent sound it has?—he gh ho!

Sim. Well, she's taken as sure as can be. [*Aside.*

Niece. Prithce tell thy master one thing; that nothing but a dull *Vulcan* wou'd have sent a *Mars* to be the spokesman of his wooing — What a complexion's there!

Sim. It is all your own, as I live, madam.

Niece. Such lips too! what dalliance must in private grow upon 'em!

Cun. Death! she courts the coxcomb!

Gov. Away, away, she does but fool with him.

Niece. So! he's touch'd, I see. [*Aside.*] Come nearer, prithee, you must not be so strange! What a soft handful of pleasure's here! [*Takes his hand.*]

Sim. I'll swear! and so there is! Well! there's no resting; I'll e'en take pity of her.

Niece. Thy master's hand to thine, is bear's skin stuff'd, compar'd to down of doves. O what a pillow for a maiden-cheek were here! Tell me, are you married, sir?

Sim. No, I ben't seriously.

Niece. Will you give me leave to send to you?

Cun. O women! women! blind as the false love you're form'd for. Death! she doats on him!

Gov. What's that to thee? Prithee mind her not; there be those that can doat as well as she.

Cun. Away, burr.

Gov. How!

Cun. Hang off flesh-hook, fasten thy itchy clasp upon some dry toadstool, that will kindle with thee, and burn and stink together.

Gov. Oh abominable! Why dost thou not love me?

Cun. Avaunt *Sycorax*! Haunt me no more! Love! the Devil! I tell thee, double dotard, I took thee but as physick to my distemper'd stomach, and now thou'rt up again, I loath thee filthily.

Gov. Oh villain!

Cun. Dost thou not see a sight might turn all lovers brains, and make 'em curse the very thoughts of woman?

Niece. Ha! ha! ha! I think I have touch'd him now; ha! ha! ha!

Sim. Ha! ha! ha!

Niece. Why do you laugh, sir?

Sim. Why only 'cause you laugh, madam. Hi! hi! hi!

Can. She has but mock'd my folly, sure, or finds not yet the bosom of my purpose.

I'll try her, and may chance to let her see,

A trick to mortify her vanity.

[*Ex. Can.*

Niece. I laugh to think of thy master now; how he'd stare and curse if he knew of this.

Sim. Ha! ha! I can't but laugh at him too: for to say the truth, tho' I say it, that shou'd not say it, he is but a fool at the bottom.

Niece. Well, sir, for this time, you shall leave me; but don't you boast now how my foolish tongue has betray'd my heart; be discreet, and I'll send to you.

Sim. You'll be sure.

Niece. If you're but silent.

Sim. O! I'm as mute as a mouse in a cheese; or a goose in a hay-rick; or a fish in a kettle; as dumb as a dead woman.

Niece. We are observ'd; there's my hand at parting.

Sim. And there's mine——umh!——good-by——
Ah!

[*Exit.*

Niece. So, *Governess*, I need not ask where you have been.

Gov. Oh, child! never was woman so abus'd.

Simple *Re-enters.*

Sim. D'ye hear, madam, I had forgot to tell you——If you think fit, I'll come and see you again in the evening.

Niece. By no means, don't offer it till I send for you.

Sim. Well, well; in the mean time, when I'm gone, you may think of things a little, as a——why, I may be convey'd by stealth into your chamber, or so; I'll lie under the bed till midnight, rather than be seen; or you may put me into one of your comb-boxes; or whelm a china basin over me, or any thing: Ah! I can creep in at a little hole.

Niece. O! I durst not venture, for my life; I charge

you on my love, never offer to come again till I send for you.

Sim. Well, well, *verbum sat*, as the *Latin* saying is, *A wink to the wife is enough*—We won't let the knight know a tittle of this.

Niece. By no means ; that wou'd spoil all : but pray be gone, we are suspected.

Sim. Well, well ; for the things that are past then, d'ye see, let us—let us tell nobody of it, that we may keep 'em secret. [In a whisper.]

Niece. Well ! now I'll make a firm trial of your love : as you love me then, not one word, sigh, or syllable more, but take your leave this moment, and be gone.

Sim. Um, gh, gh, um, gh.

[Shuts his mouth as unwilling, and Ex.]

Niece. Ha ! ha ! now do I fancy all lovers are much the same fools. How now, *Governess*, what, easing your heart with your eyes ? What's the cause, pray ?

Gov. [Crying] Ah ! take thou warning by my misfortunes ; the cause is false man, child : Ah ! lady, I have been gull'd with a shining pebble for a diamond, a very glow-worm, that I thought had fire in't, and it proves as cold and brittle as a broken looking-glass.

Niece. And how cou'd your experience be so impos'd upon, to think that such a youthful *Spring* cou'd doat upon thy *Autumn* furrows ?

Gov. Oh ! had you heard him but protest——

Niece. I shou'd have laugh'd at your credulity ; didst thou not see me mock thy folly in wanton imitation with that foolish fellow ? Cou'dst thou be so dull ? Alas ! thou wert but his bait to fowl with, not the prey ; the net, the springe, the snare to catch another bird with.

Gov. Nay, he call'd me Bird indeed.

Niece. And thou so blind not to perceive it was thy own daughter that he loves——there lies his siege, and thou wert only taken as an outwork to the place : Examine, and you'll find it so : farewell——I'll vex him still. [Exit.]

Gov. My daughter! how! my own flesh and blood my rival! I'll rival her: I'll ferret her affection, with a vengeance: A young, sly gipsy! has she no shame in her; no sense of modesty; is it so warm with her already? A brutal slut! in love with a young fellow! Foh! here she comes, I'll mumble her: just parted from him, I suppose——

Enter Mirabel.

So, gentlewoman, where have you been, pray?

Mir. No-where, mother, but at work in my own chamber.

Gov. What, in your own chamber too! fine work, I believe. Come, huffy, speak; and if thou canst with modesty, what have you been doing with your hopeful help-mate there?

Mir. Help mate!

Gov. Come, come, your *Cunningham*, huffy! Don't think to impose upon me; I am not so blind wh age yet, nor deaf.

Mir. Dumb, I am sure you are not. Pray, Madam, what ails you, are you not well?

Gov. No, nor sick, nor mad, nor in my senses, nor sleeping, nor waking, nor nothing, nor any thing: I know not what I am, nor what I am not.

Mir. What do you mean, mother?

Gov. I mean to be reveng'd, you flirt.

Mir. On whom, pray?

Gov. On thee, monster.

Mir. Revenge thou'd follow injuries: Have I wrong'd you, madam?

Gov. Ah! 'tis not your cunning, nor your *Cunningham* can blind me: Don't I know you have the impudence to be in love with him, you harlot?

Mir. I am sure they must have a great deal of impudence that told you so; I never spoke three words to the gentleman in my life, nor he to me.

Gov. O astonishing!

Mir. I have heard indeed, that he has made some of

fers of his love to you, and if he has abus'd, or wrong'd your good-nature, so heartily I hate him for't, that I wou'd join with you in utmost malice to revenge it.

Gov. May I believe thee?

Mir. You may, upon my life, mother.

Gov. Then thou thyself shalt quit me of his baseness. Ah! child, he has given me *Ixion's* plague; never such a masculine cloud so airy and so subtle was e'er embrac'd by poor believing woman——But if I live, I'll have him quitted at his equal weapon: thou art young; follow him; tempt his desires with all the subtlest baits of woman. He cannot freeze at such a springing beauty: And when thou hast him fast by the amorous gills, draw him, drag him, drown him on the hook of disdain, and make this base dissembler know, thou hast reveng'd thy mother's wrongs with scorn for scorn.

Mir. This is a very odd undertaking, mother; how it may succeed, I can't tell; but I promise you on my word, I'll try.

Gov. Ah! I'll warrant thee, a young woman may bring any thing about with a young fellow: come along, and I'll slip thee at him this moment. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir Gregory, and Simple.

Sir Greg. Why *Sam! Samuel!* thou art not stark mad, art thou! Wilt thou not tell me how my mistress does?

Sim. Your mistress! Hi! hi!

Sir Greg. Yah! yih! Why what the devil ails the fellow? Did she receive the thing that I sent her kindly or no, firrah?

Sim. Sirrah! humph. Then to answer your question, and your language in order——*First*, I must tell you, *Knight* (plain *Knight*, d'ye observe me) the thing that you sent her, by the thing that you sent, was, for the thing's sake that was sent to carry the thing that you sent, (d'ye observe me) very kindly receiv'd; so much for your question: And now for your language—

First, fir, there's a receipt in full for all my wages; and now you owe me nothing. *Secondly*, There's the last cast coat you gave me; and now, fir, I owe you nothing (my waistcoat's my own, and I'll keep it). But the *Sirrah* is yours again, fir. *Thirdly* and *lastly*, I am my own man again: And, *Fourthly*, in the *Fifth* place — fare you well.

Sir *Greg.* Why, *Sam! Sam!* Prithee let me speak with thee a little: I'll lay my life some hare has cross'd him.

Sim. Knight, if you be a Knight, stop there, and don't set up for a lady-maker; because, perhaps, there are some ladies that are as fond of making gentlemen — d'ye see! As for the lady, whoever says she's not a fine lady, a delicate creature, and a person of perfect honour; I say he's a poltroon, a rascal, and if he does not keep his tongue between his teeth, I'll give him a chuck o'the chin, shall chop him in two, and strike him dumb during life.

Sir *Greg.* Prithee, pox! why in such a passion, man, I know no body says any other of her.

Sim. If you do, fir, I expect, as you are a man of honour, you should let me know it——any man that dares but think of it in my hearing, shall hear of it from a person that he little thinks of. People must not suppose that some ladies favours are common; or that promises and protestations are things of no moment between parties and parties: and I say still, whatever may have pass'd between a certain lady and a certain party, whom for sake's sake I won't name; still, I say, the lady is a person of honour; and being a person of honour, she is not to be treated but as a person of honour.

Sir *Greg.* Why I say she is a person of honour.

Sim. You say she is a person of honour; what is that to me, fir? I want to see the man that does not say she's a person of honour.

Sir *Greg.* If I cou'd not find in my heart to kick my shoe in thy face, buckle and all, I am an ass, and no gentleman.

Sim. Kick your shoe at me ! Don't do it, Knight, I give you fair warning ; I say, don't do it ; your shoe's but thrown away if you do ; 'tis but plaguing yourself to no purpose. For why should not one man have as good an eye as another ; and when one man's as good as another, why should not a lady please her own fancy ? Look ye, I name no parties——because I really stand all this while in the cold——but when you see me next, you'll find, for a certain lady's sake, if there's a tally man to be found in *Europe*, I shall appear like a gentleman. [Exit.]

Sir Greg. If this fellow ben't out of his few wits, then I am out of my five senses ; either the sight of the lady has bewitch'd him, or else he's drunk, or else he walks in his sleep, or else he's a fool, or a knave, or both, or one of the three, or something or other, I'm certain : Yet, now I think on't, she has not us'd me so civilly as her uncle promis'd she shou'd, tho' that does not signify a fillip ; he says, I shall have her, and if she won't come to in a fair way, egad she shall fast herself into a stomach, for *Sir Gregory* ! [Exit.]

Enter Y. Outwit and Mr. Credulous Outwit in the Highway, arm'd.

Y. Out. So, we are got to the bottom of the hill before him ; here from behind this hedge we may seize him.

Cre. So we may, indeed, sir ; but where are the other two gentlemen, won't they lay hold on him too ? For if the young man shou'd resist, how do you know but he may frighten me, and then get the better of you ?

Y. Out. O ! they are ready posted on the other side ; we can't miss. Look-ye, sir, if you'll be rul'd, and travel this road but one week with me, you shall live better upon't all the year after, than the best preferment in your College's gift.

Cre. Do you really think so, sir ? for, seriously, I wou'd not do an ill thing ; but, really, my allowance

from my uncle has been extremely small, and twenty pounds, at this time, wou'd be an inconceivable service to me.

Y. Out. With what considerate good husbandry the fool turns rogue! [*Aside.*] Ay, ay, sir, you'll find this a quicker revenue than your *sic Probas, Ergo's, & Igitur's*, and I am sure you have Logic enough to prove, that *Omne utile est honestum*.

Cre. That's true, indeed, sir; besides, you know, *Necessitas non habet legem*. And, really, if it were not to do me a mighty piece of service, I wou'd not do a base thing, for the whole world.

Y. Out. Nor I, upon my credit, sir: But truly it is a little hard, that when one gentleman wants ten pieces, or so, that another, who perhaps has ten thousand, shall be brute enough not to supply him.

Cre. Why, really, sir, that's exactly my case; and, seriously, I don't know any great obligation one has to be so rigidly just to such sort of people, that a——really——in a manner, don't deserve what they have.

Y. Out. How quiet the fool's conscience is!——Odio! take your pistol, sir,——I hear somebody——let's not be seen yet.

Enter Lady Gentry in a Man's Habit, Sir Thr. and Priscian.

L. Gen. Where's Mr. Outwit?

Sir Thr. There he stands ready at his post, behind the hedge——but, hark you, spouse, you must bate a little of your usual courage in your resistance, that you mayn't frighten the scholar into a retreat.

Pris. He tells you right, madam.

L. Gen. Go, fools! teach your grannams: You are always fall of your advice when there's no occasion for't. Where's the purse?

Pris. There 'tis, of the comedians coin; all counters.

Sir Thr. We'll turn 'em into gold before night, boy.

L. Gen. Away.—— [*Exeunt Pris and Thr.*]

Look how that fool loiters now! Hey, William! along;

long, along with the horses, we sha'n't get to *London* to-night.

Y. Outwit and Credulous enter, and present Pistols.

Y. Out. Stand.

Cre. Sir, we are gentlemen, really under necessity, and hope you won't take it ill; for, upon my word—for my part—really, you'll find me very civil—therefore, pray, sir, don't make a disturbance—but, really, consider your own danger———[*All the while trembling.*]

Y. Out. Blood, sir, —— deliver, or you are a dead man.

Cre. O blefs me!

L. Gen. Look you, rascals, I'm alive yet, and till I am dead, I'll see you damn'd before I'll part with a farthing. [*Draws.*]

[*Priscian and Sir Threadbare rush in from behind, and seize her.*]

Prif. Nay, then, if you are so hot a spark, sir, we must secure you.

Cre. O dear! I am glad they came. [*Aside.*]

L. Gen. Well! Gentlemen, I am in your power, but treat me like a man, at least; my money, I presume, is all you have occasion for; there 'tis, and all I have, indeed; a good round hundred pieces.

Y. Out. Is this all, sir?

L. Gen. My last farthing, upon my honour, gentlemen———pray, sir———

Cre. O! don't hurt the gentleman——Sir, you really look like a civil gentleman, and if I had the honour to be better acquainted with you, you'd find me another-guess man than you take me for, I can assure you; and if ever you travel to *Cambridge*, sir, I shall be very proud to see you in our buttery, sir——

Sir Thr. Huh, is the devil in you? [*Steps his mouth.*]

Y. Out. Come, fir, we must secure you from following us.

L. Gen. As I am a gentleman, I never will stir.

Y. Out. We don't intend you shall, fir, for we will bind you to your good behaviour.——

L. Gen. Nay, pray, gentlemen.

Sir Thr. We'll only leave you on t'other side of the hedge, fir——Here, do you hold the money, while we secure him.

Y. Out. Away with him——[Exit Prif. Sir Thr. and La. Gen.]

Why, look you, fir, did not I tell you? Shew me e'er a page in *Seneca* now, that will furnish a man so speedily? Here's that will mend your commons with a witness! You'll have no longer need to fize your belly out with rumps, kidneys, and cues of single beer. Here's that will make a beggar fat in a fortnight. *Aurum palpabile & potabile*, fir.

Cre. Why, really, fir, I am apt to think the gentleman cou'd not want this; for, by his habit, he seem'd to be a person of fortune.

Y. Out. Let fortune take care of that; you and I will never want, fir, while others have it.

Cre. Why, really, fir, it is but a little hard there shou'd not be a more equal distribution of fortune's benefits.

Y. Out. Mum. [Re-enter Priscian and Sir Threadbare.] Is all safe, bullies?

Sir Thr. Secure; the gentleman thinks himself most happy in his loss, with his safe life and limbs, and redoubles his first vow, as he is a gentleman, never to pursue us.

Y. Out. Away then——Let's disperse; Mr. Credulous and you shall bear the purchase, while I and Priscian take some other course: at the *Three Cups in St. Giles's* we all meet; but remember the booty is not to be open'd till all are present; the loser said an hundred, and it can weigh no less.

Cre. Sir, I am sure I wou'd not wrong you, or any gentleman of a shilling, to gain never so much by it.

Y. Out. O! never talk of that.

Sir Thr. Come, sir, I'll guide you. [*Exeunt Cre. & Thr.*]

Y. Out. Ha! ha! ha! where's the thief that's robb'd?

Enter Lady Gentry.

L. Gen. Here, Mr. Outwit, all fellows now.

Y. Out. 'Twas neatly done, i'faith, girl; now to turn that bag of counters into current pieces, & *allum est*. You know the place.

Pris. I have told her, sir, — the *Three Cups* in *St. Giles's*.

Y. Out. Good — — — Is the *Constable's* dress ready for Sir *Threadbare*?

Pris. All ready, sir, not a hair of his false beard wanting.

Y. Out. Excellent! The moment he has seiz'd the scholar, then send me immediate word on't; then come I in his cousin's own shape, by mere accident, to bring him off. But, father, you must pay the reckoning; since you are so fond of wit, I'll beggar you if you pay the price of mine, sir; for when this cheat's ripe, sir, you'll find it will beget another, sir; that third a fourth; and so onward to an endless generation — — — You had better come to composition, father, or I shall bubble you without mercy; you'll find it cheaper, father, than this way of starving me: for I will cheat none but you, dear father. [*Exeunt.*]



A C T III.

S C E N E, *a Garden.*

Enter Niece and Mirabel.

Niece. **A**ND so your mother, to revenge her own quarrel to him, has oblig'd you to make love to Mr. *Cunningham*?

Mir. Yes; is not it a very notable project? What a subtle devil must this love be, when it can make such egregious fools of old folks! But I had forgot to tell you, madam, I have undertaken to go through with it too.

Niece. How!

Mir. Not without acquainting you with it beforehand.

Niece. Oh! your servant—Try him, you'll find him flexible, I dare say.

Mir. Ay; but then how am I sure to be stubborn myself; my honesty is the best part of my portion, and I shou'd be loth to spoil my marriage by playing the fool with him.

Niece. I fancy there's no fear of that, for he writ me a letter t'other day, and propos'd you as a wife for Sir *Gregory*; 'tis in his power to serve you, if you can like the man.

Mir. I cou'd like the Ladyship strangely—And as for the man, I had as lief have a fool, as one that's so wise, he'll always think me a fool—Wou'd he wou'd tempt me!

Niece. Here's company, let's go into the arbour.

Mir. No, I must beg your pardon——my mother expects me. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Sir Oliver and Sir Gregory. [*With Music.*]

Sir Ol. Why, now you take the right course, *Sir Gregory*——Music will melt her; I could force her; but a heart, you know, that's gently won, is a man's own for ever. Have you a good concert?

Sir Greg. O! a curious noise as ever you saw, *Sir*——Indeed I would have had the lame woman with the dulcimer, and old *Grate-cars* the blind cymbal; but they sent me word they were just hir'd to play country dances at my Lord Mayor's.

Sir Ol. Why, then she must take the will for the deed; a woman must be woo'd a hundred several ways; you may try a thousand times before you touch 'em in the right vein; but That once found! ah! they lie as snug and as tame in a man's arms as a sucking rabbit.

Sir Greg. O dear! ah! I warrant 'em they are pretty soft fools when their cloaths are off.

Sir Ol. Why, did you never try, sir?

Sir Greg. Yes, yes, I have try'd, sir, but 'twas to no purpose: I remember the last time I was upon my knees to our chambermaid, she run her elbow in my throat till she had almost strangled me, and then broke my head with the bedstaff, to fetch me to life again.

Sir Ol. Why, is't possible! What, did you never make a fool of a tenant's daughter?

Sir Greg. Never, really, sir, I never could get one to hold still since I was born.

Sir Ol. Hey-dey! what, come to *London* with a maidenhead, Knight! A gentleman of your rank, and ride with a cloak-bag? Never an hostess by the way to leave it with? No tapster's sister? nor head-offler's daughter?

Sir Greg. O! well mock'd, old Witmonger——I keep it for your niece.

Sir Ol. Don't say so for shame, she'll laugh at thee;

why, 'tis a batchelor's penny, man; he may give it to a beggar in the summer-time, and ne'er be call'd to account for it; the filliest wife is not fool enough to expect it.

Sir Greg. 'Ad, wou'd I had but known that, I cou'd have stopt a beggar's mouth by the way curiously, that rail'd at me, because I'd give her nothing——But now for the music, fir.

Sir Ol. You'll find her in the garden; her ear must reach it; I'll leave you, fir.

Sir Greg. Now, strike up, my boys,.

[*Music plays and Ex.*

Well! I'll say it, this was cruel fine! she must like it—Now, gentlemen, you may go.

Niece from the Arbour.

Niece. Whose could this music be? 'Twas pleasant at the season; it must be *Cunningham*! Who's there?

Sir Greg. Madam, I am your humble servant——
Good-morrow to you.

Niece. Pshah! An ill day, and a thousand follow thee.

Sir Greg. 'Slife, that's fix hundred more than an Almanack has.

Niece. Was this thy odious music, then?

Sir Greg. Odious, madam!

Niece. Horrible! Canst thou suppose such stuff would please a woman of any taste?

Sir Greg. Taste! Why, madam, I did not design you shou'd eat it; but if your taste were never so dainty, you might have lik'd it; for I am sure it cost me sauce.

Niece. Sure there is no impudence more provoking than the dull stupidity of a sufficient fool! How durst you do this? wretch! idiot! For hadst thou but an insect's understanding, thou wou'dst have known how mortally I hate thee. I thought I had enough before abus'd thee: the mocks and spiteful language I have given thee, wou'd have serv'd ten reasonable men! In my conscience! thou devourest more affronts, than

Offer to sow strife between my poor Niece and I! I cou'd find in my heart to make her unsay it all again—Good-morrow, Niece, good-morrow.

Niece. Good-morrow, fir, and to you, Sir Gregory, many fair ones.

Sir Ol. You are a coxcomb, I tell you——How dost thou do, child, this morning?—A fool!—Did you sleep well, child? It's well Fortune took care of an estate for thee; for thou'dst starve by thy understanding.

Sir Greg. Ads-heart! now I'm bang'd o' both sides.

Niece. Pray, fir, is there any difference between you?

Sir Ol. Yes, a great deal, I hope, child; as much as between a man and an owl.

Sir Greg. Ah! 'tis no matter for that; I'm a Knight as well as you, fir.

Sir Ol. Abuse a lady's kindness——Wilt thou take the air to-day, Niece?

Niece. Indeed the day's inviting, fir; if Sir Gregory will please to favour us with his company.

Sir Ol. D'ye hear? d'ye hear? Shallow Brains! d'ye hear't continu'd to your face, to your teeth!

Sir Greg. Well, well, laud! why sure!——I have done, fir.

Sir Ol. Don't provoke me another time, then.

Sir Greg. Madam——you have dropt your breast-knot.

Niece. Pray wear it, fir; in time a better favour may fall to you.

Sir Greg. Well, well, I have no malice, mun, I forgive you all.

Sir Ol. Now I leave you to redeem your credit with me, let me have a better account of your next attack, or —— [Exit.]

Sir Greg. Ah, ah, ah, you little rogue! were you caught i'faith! What! I was not to know I had your heart, was I! We overheard you, mun, when you were fighting alone for fear I shou'd be false to you. Ah! you handsome devil you, are you not glad to find me true now at last then?——Hey!

Niece. Let me see——ay, he's out of hearing——

Sir Greg. O dear! now I will so pay off those cherry lips of thine. [Offers to kiss her.]

Niece. Stand off——monster. [Strikes his ear.]

Sir Greg. How!

Niece. Incurrible coxcomb! Was not thy last abuse sufficient! A man with half an ounce of brains wou'd have died on't, run to the next tree or river to have hang'd or drown'd himself, rather than bear such infamous usage.

Sir Greg. Ay, you may well call it infamous indeed! 'tis so shameful.

Niece. And will thy groveling spirit still endure it, then? What villainous, impenetrable stuff is thy skull made of? Will nothing pierce it?

Sir Greg. Yes, yes, assure yourself, unkind words may do much. [Half crying.]

Niece. And dost thou want 'em, flint-head? Haven't I consum'd my woman's spleen to stir thee? Will no hard usage batter thee?

Sir Greg. Yes, yes, I know you wou'd knock my brains out if you cou'd. Why did you not offer to do it before your uncle, mistress? I'gad he wou'd have flay'd ybur backside for you.

Niece. Why thou greater idiot than I thought thee, wou'dst thou have me tell my uncle, that I design to fool thee? Pr'ythee call him back, that I may use thee better, and make thee yet a greater fool——Dost not thou wear my favour there?

Sir Greg. Yes, and here too, with a pox to you.

[Holding his hand to his ear.]

Niece. If thou but knew'st with what contempt thou hast it, how many cordial curses came along with it, thou'dst tremble but to handle it.

Sir Greg. Pshah! pox! take it again! I'll see it burn'd before I'll be thus plagu'd with it.

Niece. No; on hazard of thy life I charge thee wear it still, till one that merits it demands it from thee; bear it, like the beaten ass his burthen, from one dear friend to another; if mine be but so wise and apprehen-

five, as my opinion speaks him to my heart, it stays not long on thy desertless head; I'll make thee, ere I ha' done, not dare to wear any thing of mine, tho' I shou'd freely give it thee; but thou shalt sweat and tremble while thou hast it, as if some poisonous toad had crawl'd upon thy naked breast, which to remove were equal horror to endure. Now as you like this, sir, be troublesome another time, and so good-morrow to you. [*Exit.*]

Sir Greg. O! that I had but the courage now to dash my brains out; ingenuity enough to hang myself without pain: I'm sure it's time I were dead some way or other, if a man cou'd but find it out without hurt or danger. Who cou'd think now that a handsome Lady cou'd be such a devil in her heart! Laud! if she's such a fury now, what a swinging witch will she make when she's an old woman! What to do with her the devil knows; for if I complain to her uncle, she'll use me better again, and then he'll use me worse; so that between 'em both I am box'd and bandied, and sweetened and sour'd, and friended and fool'd, and blam'd and bubbled, and vex'd and plagu'd, and as miserable, for aught I see, as if I was married to her—— Oh! here comes my friend *Cunningham*, I'll make my moan to him.

Enter Cunningham.

Cun. I cannot tear her memory from my heart—— She sticks in spite of resolution.

Sir Greg. O *Cunningham*!

Cun. *Sir Gregory*! the favourite! the victor! the town's happy man!

Sir Greg. Pshaw! pr'ythee none of your jeers upon me; I come to thee for comfort, and thou makest a jest of my misfortunes!

Cun. I, sir! what by applauding your fortune, and giving you joy of your success?

Sir Greg. O! pray hold your hand, sir; I have been bobb'd enough already, and now you're for coming over me a new way!

Cun. What do you mean? Pray, sir, explain yourself.

Sir Greg. Wilt thou have the truth in a word? I have been made the rankest ass that was ever born to a thousand pound a-year—I'll swear I did not think my whole body, cloaths, and all, cou'd have yielded so many scurvy mangy names, as my mistress has call'd me.

Cun. Is't possible?

Sir Greg. Faith 'tis true; she presented me with this favour before her uncle, and as soon as his back was turn'd, she fell a-cursing me so heartily for wearing it, that one side of my skull has ached ever since, and yet in a manner she forc'd me to wear it too, till a certain friend of hers, she said, that better deserv'd it, and to whom she design'd it as a token, should take it from me.

Cun. O blest discovery! how have I wrong'd her truth and goodness! *Sir Gregory*, now I'll prove myself your friend indeed! Pull it off this minute! You are not sure of a moment's life while 'tis about you. I know the man that lies in wait for you and it.

Sir Greg. How! the man that lies in wait, say you?

Cun. Ah! plague of her favour, say I! I prize my dear friend's life above a thousand of 'em——Let's see't——I know more of this business than you are aware of.

Sir Greg. Do you so? then, faith, you shall e'en take it, for I'm sure 'tis not for my wearing; that she told herself.

Cun. The only true thing she ever told you—Thank you, sir; now I am the man that says, let her speak do his worst, you shall live in spite of him.

Sir Greg. Ah sir, I'd fain live my time out, methinks.

Cun. He that says otherwise, must lie in his throat, sir; for once I'll stand his fury; and wear it for you, sir. *Monsieur Simple* may put on as big looks as he pleases, but I'll keep it for my friend's sake in spite of him.

Sir Greg. *Simple!* what is he my rival! my own man that was?

Cun. Ev'n he, I can assure you, fir———Pray tell me, did not you send him to her with a handkerchief yesterday?

Sir Greg. Ay, faith, and so I did, and when he came back he talk'd as big and as pleasant, and as saucy and as wild as a madman.

Cun. This, fir, confirms what I was witness of——I saw her give him such encouragements, that nothing but a woman doating, cou'd have made her modesty submit to; and the vanity of his conquest, it seems, has run the poor fellow distracted.

Sir Greg. Nay, distracted he must certainly be, for he talk'd to me as if he had courage, and I'm sure he never had any when he was in his few senses——But can a woman of her rank be so opposite to common sense and reason, as to fall in love with such a scoundrel?

Cun. Lord! how you talk, fir? Reason in love! and in a woman too! Why, not one man in a thousand can Pretend to it, 'tis the prerogative of love to make wise folks Wit-alls; and always the stronger the passion, the greater the fool! How many preposterous examples of it have we about this town, pray! How many young fellows marry their mother's maids! How many rich old widows part with their jointures for conjugal comfort to wild young fellows, who mind them no more than they do their estates, just take possession of 'em once, and after never come near 'em! And how many doating old fellows marry young girls to bring them heirs, perhaps of an ensign's getting! Nay, have not we seen a great lady bring her stable into her chamber, and fall in love with her horse-keeper?

Sir Greg. Why, did ever love play such jades' tricks, fir?

Cun. O thousands, thousands, fir; 'twere endless to recite em; but you are happy in this early warning, fir; 'tis well you know her, and well you have 'scap'd her.—If you had married her——

Sir Greg. O Lord, ay!

Cun. What a swinging stag's head had you had in a fortnight!

Sir Greg. Five a-top, I'll warrant her.

Cun. E'en down into the country again, fir, and let her find some other fool's head to plant on—Here comes her Uncle, not a word to him of what I've told you, that may breed ill blood, fir.

Sir Greg. No, no, I'll dissemble to him as she does to me, faith—away. *[Exit Cun.]*

Enter Sir Oliver.

Tho', to say the truth, I dare not tell him the truth, for fear she shou'd break my head for't.

Sir Ol. Well, fir, are you satisfied with my niece now, pray?

Sir Greg. O yes, fir, perfectly; I have not the least scruple remaining.

Sir Ol. I think she has taken pains to convince you of her inclinations.

Sir Greg. Lord, fir, I'm as well satisfied of 'em, as if I were married to her, I don't think she cou'd love me better if I were her husband.

Sir Ol. You can't imagine how heartily you provok'd me, when you bely'd her goodness to me—You vext me to the blood.

Sir Greg. Why, really I was a fool, fir, I did not know half so much of her then, as I do now. I'll gue on her! *[Aside.]*

Enter Niece.

Niece. Ha! the favour's gone, I see! It must be *Cunningham* that has it; how I applaud his apprehension! His wit has life in it, I'll send him another token for't immediately, and by the same fool of a messenger—Oh! *Sir Gregory*, where have you been this age? How cou'd you be so long from me?

Sir Ol. Well said, Niece! What, so fond before your Uncle! What wou'd she do in private then?

Sir Greg. Only give me a kick o'the guts, I suppose, and call me rascal.

G

Niece. But where's my favour, servant? the love-knot I gave you?

Sir Ol. Odso! that's true, Niece, and I never thought of it—the favour, fir, the love-knot she gave you?

Sir Greg. Hah!

Sir Ol. What, dumb, deaf, bewitch'd—Oons! the favour, fir?

Sir Greg. A pox of all lady's favours, I say, I'm sure they are damn'd troublesome to me!—The favour, Sir!

Sir Ol. Ay, the favour, fir.

Sir Greg. Why, fir, I was way-laid for it by three or four swinging bullies, and they all fix of 'em drew upon me at once; and—look you, fir, in short life's life, and a favour's but a favour, and so I parted from 't.

Niece. O unfortunate woman! my first kindness flighted thus!

Sir Ol. Oons! fir, I must tell you, I am very lousily ashamed of you: What the devil, have you parted with your common sense for ever? will you never come together again?—I must seem to tease him a little—for now I see his heart is upon her, I don't know but I may make him take her with nothing [*Aside.*] Come, come, Niece, 'twas but a trifle—Let it pass.

Niece. 'Tis not the thing, fir, but the manner of his parting with it that grieves me.

Sir Greg. O dissembling gipsy! O! if I durst but speak now, or cou'd but be believ'd when I do speak, I cou'd tell a tale wou'd make all her impudent hair stand strait up an end.

Niece. Well, Sir, at your request, I'll shew at once my duty and my love in forgetting it; and, to confirm my affection stronger yet—here, fir, pray wear this diamond, and let me judge of your sincerity by your keeping it.

Sir Greg. Ah! you know it won't be long, like a cunning witch, as you are! [*Aside to her.*]

Niece. You had best part with that now, as you did with the favour.

Sir Greg. Yah! why so I had, I suppose, or I shall

have but an indifferent life on't, as you have handled the matter, truly.

Niece. But you must promise me, dear Sir Gregory.

Sir Greg. Yah! you coaxing devil!

Sir Ol. Ah! why this is as it shou'd be now—There's musick in this; no more words then—on *Tuesday* next prepare to tune your instruments; you shall stay no longer faith, Knight. *[Slaps his back.]*

Sir Greg. Well, well, sir, the sooner the better.

Sir Ol. Niece, you hear me.

Niece. I'm all obedience, sir—Whatever you've heard me say,—remember I hate you still—cordially.

[Exit with Sir Ol.]

Sir Greg. Ay, ay! Plague on't—I know your mind to a tittle.—Now can't I forbear laughing to hear the old knight talk as familiarly of *Tuesday* next, as if we really lov'd one another—Tho' if I am not damnably mistaken, our wedding is as far off, as 'twas seven year before I saw her. If he shou'd bring it about, I'gad he must conjure; for if he does not raise the devil to fright me into it, I fancy I shall never have natural courage enough to board her.

Lovers may talk of joys,

And pretty toys,

And cooing;

I'm sure I only find

Bobs, blows, and noise

In my poor wooing.

[Exit.]



A C T IV.

SCENE, *continues.*

Enter Sir Oliver, and Young Outwit.

Sir Ol. O That ever I was born ! or shou'd live to have a son, whose face is the fore-runner of ill-fortune ! I never see thee without some vexation at the heels of thee. I knew there was mischief in thy very looks ; that before thy mouth open'd, ill news wou'd come out on't.

Y. Out. With submission, sir, I think I bring you very good news, to give you timely notice how you may save at once your kinsman's life, and the perpetual infamy that his suffering the law wou'd bring upon your family——None of our name were ever hang'd yet, sir——What a miraculous escape it was that I heard on't !

Sir Ol. Ah ! wou'd thou hadst never heard on't.

Y. Out. Ay ! that's true too, sir, so it had never been done ; but to see how critically fortunate some people are ! Sir, if I'm alive he was carry'd to justice *Bind-over's* door, nay the constable's hand was upon the knocker, and that I shou'd (before he had power to raise it) just step in to his redemption, was, I confess, prodigious : in two minutes more his *Mittimus* had been sign'd for *Newgate*, and then at such a juncture too ! the sessions on *Thursday* ; condemn'd on *Friday* ; sentence on *Saturday* ; dungeon on *Sunday*, and a Psalm in a cart on *Monday* : terrible *Tyburn* ceremonies, sir !

Sir Ol. Prithee no more on't —— I don't like th' subject——Where did you leave the wretch ?

Y. Out. He's in the constable's hands now, in the Hall, fir———And, poor gentleman, his accuser with him.

Sir Ol. What is his accuser?

Y. Out. Oh! a judge's son, they tell me, fir; one that in a fit of malice will hang a man, and it shall not cost him a farthing.

Sir Ol. Ho! within there!

Enter a Servant.

Call up the folks in the Hall—I had much hope of him for a scholar top; a thing thou wert never fit for: I had placed half the comfort of my life in him.

Y. Out. If you are wise, he may be redeem'd yet fir.

Sir Ol. Cou'd I but lop him from my family, he should hang for me; I'd save no thief, to make the proverb good upon me.

Enter Sir Threadbare as a Constable, with Credulous, and Lady Gentry, (as a Man.)

Oh! your servant, fir,——you are in a hopeful way, indeed:

Cred. Ah! fir, I am a ruin'd creature, 'tis true——but don't, ah! don't kill me quite, fir; your reproaches are as terrible as the gallows I deserve, fir.

Y. Out. Nay, good fir, don't grieve him, and hurt yourself too.

Sir Ol. Hold your peace, fir——Come but once in seven years to see your Uncle, and then brought home by a constable!

Y. Out. Dear fir, don't speak so loud, for your own honour's sake: don't profess to love a man of wit, and shew none yourself, fir.

Sir Ol. Dissolute villain!——Are you the gentleman, fir, that say you were robb'd by this person?

L. Gen. The unfortunate one, fir, that fell into the hands of four highwaymen, whereof this fellow, whom, for manners sake, I wou'd call your kinsman as

little as I cou'd, was one; the rest are fled, but I may yet overtake 'em, fir, and I have sworn to hang one of 'em, tho' it cost me five hundred pound in the prosecution.

Sir Ol. O graceless rogue!

Y. Out. Not so loud, good fir.

Sir Ol. Were these your College-Lectures? these your degrees, fir? Nine years at the University for this fellowship!

Y. Out. Take your voice lower, dear fir.

Sir Ol. Well, fir, what was your loss, pray?

L. Gen. The constable can tell you that, fir——the money's yet untouch'd in his hands; 'twas an hundred pieces when I fill'd the purse, fir——but I shan't receive it.

Sir Ol. Not receive it! Pray why so, fir? don't you own it all you lost?

L. Gen. All the money, fir——but I had a diamond ring too, which one of his gang took a fancy to; it was the instrument of a firm contract between a great lawyer's daughter and myself.

Y. Out. I told you what he was, fir! Pray, fir, what does the diamond concern this gentleman?

L. Gen. As much as my money did, fir; he shall answer both, now I have him, or swing for't.

Y. Out. Look you, fir——don't be pert——for, blood! if I meet you in another place——

Sir Ol. Is the devil in you?

L. Gen. Pert, fir!

Sir Ol. Are you mad!

Y. Out. What does he mean by swing for't?

L. Gen. The gallows: If you have a mind to hear of me, fir, you'll find me at the sessions——Mr. Constable, secure your prisoner. Death, fir, I did not come here to be brow-beaten.

Sir Ol. Hold, fir; pray let me speak with you.

Cra. Ah! dear fir; [*Crying*] ah! don't anger him, good cousin.

Sir Ol. Now who's the fool? Was this a time, when we are in his power too——Pray, fir, what will satisfy you?

L. Gen. Sir, I expect the sum in my purse unbroken, and an hundred marks.

Y. Out. A hundred rascals.

L. Gen. No, sir, nor five hundred such, with you at the head of 'em.

Y. Out. Blood! sir——take your course, you sha'n't have a shilling.

Sir Ol. Oons! is the fellow drunk? Do you know what you say?

Y. Out. A hundred dogs-dungs! ———death, sir, do your worst.

Sir Ol. You do yours, I'm sure. Who's loud now, fool!

Y. Out. Blood! an hundred marks!

Sir Ol. Wou'd you have the fellow hang'd?

Y. Out. Nay, sir, I ask your pardon——you may do what you please, but if it were my business——if he wou'd not take three-score pound, I'd see him rot before I'd give him a farthing.

L. Gen. Sir, I shall not bate you a single half-penny.

Sir Ol. And, pray sir, what's seven pound more, that all this coil's about?

Y. Out. Nay, sir, please yourself; if you don't think seven pound worth saving, with all my heart.

Sir Ol. What's that to you, sir, save your own money——'twou'd be mighty wise indeed, in such a case as this, wou'd not it? Go, Mr. *Wisdom*, live by your wits, go.

Y. Out. I practise all I can, sir.

Sir Ol. Blockhead! ——Sir, if you please to walk into the next room, I'll pay you the money, and Mr. *Constable*, pray do you be witness of the full satisfaction.

Y. Out. Hark you, sir; since you will play the fool one way, be wise another, at least; don't give your money for nothing, for 'tis all lost if you don't stop the *Constable's* mouth too.

Sir Ol. Dear Mr. *Impertinence*, keep your wisdom for your own affairs——Why cou'd thy thick scull imagine now I did not design to do that of myself——As for you, my precious kinsman, whom I design'd for a *Welsh* pas-

tor, I will now turn out like a wild goat, to graze upon the *Welsh* mountains—go—Will you please to walk this way, Gentlemen? If I had been rul'd by you now.

[*Ex. Sir Ol. La. Gen. and Constable.*]

Y. *Out.* I am very sorry for your misfortune, cousin.

Cre. O dear! O miserable! What will become of me?

Y. *Out.* I'm thinking what course of life you can turn yourself to.

Cre. O! good sir! I wou'd turn to any thing that's honest.

Y. *Out.* Ay, that's the thing, sir, honest! Why you'll starve in any business of that kind.

Cre. Why then, can you think of any other thing, cousin, that you are sure a man cannot be found out in?

Y. *Out.* Nay, that's not the thing neither; for a man may be a profess'd rogue, if he has but industry and assurance enough to go thro' with it; if you were but clerk to some *suburb* Justice of Peace now——or informer to the Society——or——it's a mighty matter to have the protection of the law——

Cre. Ay, so it is, indeed, cousin; I believe they'd find me for their purpose; for tho' I say it, I am a man of very reform'd principles.

Y. *Out.* I'll think of something for you.

Cre. Pray let it be safe tho', good cousin.

Y. *Out.* I'll warrant you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Master *Credulous*, your Uncle desires you to forbear the house, and has order'd me to take you a lodging of twelve-pence a-week, in *Thieving-Lane*, and when the servants have din'd, he says he'll send your diet every day from their table.

Cre. Ah! this is an unfortunate welcome, cousin.

Y. *Out.* 'Tis so indeed—I'll do what I can for you.

Cre. Do you think, cousin, I cou'd not pick up a penny by writing a *News-Paper*?

Y. *Out.* Humh! Why that's a good thing too; but

I'm afraid, cousin, your invention is not quick enough for that; but I'll think of it.

Cre. Pray ye, do——You'll bring my cousin word where I lodge.

Serv. Yes, sir.——

Y. Out. I'll come and visit you.

Cre. Ah! cousin, you are the only friend I have in the world——good-by. [*Exeunt Credulous and Servant.*]

Y. Out. So! This was the luckiest cheat I e'er claim'd share in; of double profit too——puts money in my pocket, and him out of favour, that stood between me and my expectation: my father's *Cambridge* jewel, much suspected to be his heir; now I think there's a bar in's hopes.

Enter Sir Threadbare, and Lady Gentry, with Money.

Sir Thr. It chinks, it chinks; make haste, boy.

L. Gen. Where shall we meet?

Y. Out. Meet! death! we'll never part——let me kiss thee, dear rogue, thou hast perform'd to a miracle——By *Mercury*, I cou'd dwell upon thy lips for ever.

[*Kisses her.*]

Sir Thr. Hold, hold, sir, that's no part of the booty.

L. Gen. What have you to do to bid him hold——cou'd not I have done it myself?

Sir Thr. Ay; but if you shou'd have forgot, you know, spouse——

L. Gen. Pishah——At the old place in *St. Giles's*.

Y. Out. I'll be with you in a half an hour.

[*Ex. Sir Thr. and L. Gen.*]

Enter Cunningham and Mirabel.

Mir. It seems then, sir, I'm deceiv'd! Why, I have been told by twenty people, you were directly in love with me.

Cun. No, you're not deceiv'd, for I dare swear you did not believe any one of 'em.

Mir. That's more than you know, perhaps.

Cun. I'm sure on't——for when men say they love without hope, they lye. Now, pray lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me, did you ever give me the least encouragement?

Mir. Now, fir, pray lay your hand upon the same place, and tell me, did I ever shew you any sign of my dislike?

Cun. Perhaps no———but if you had, I might have cur'd that by flattery; but you do worse, you shew indifference, and that's the devil to get over.

Mir. How do you know but a little flattery may cure that too. What the duce, have I nothing about me that deserves a civil thing to be said to it?

Cun. Have I any thing about me, madam, that deserves to be laugh'd at?

Mir. You are the most phlegmatick creature.

Cun. And you are the merriest gentlewoman.

[*Laering.*

Mir. Suppose I really loved you, fir?

Cun. Why then, if I were not very phlegmatick, you'd be ruin'd; for 'tis six to four I should like you; and if I shou'd marry you, I shou'd ruin myself.

Mir. Are you then really so indifferent as you seem to be?

Cun. Are you not wiser than you seem to be?

Mir. Why, what ails me?

Cun. You seem to me, either to be out of your own wits, or think me out of mine: Now if you'll give me leave, I'll propose a thing to you, which must, at least, prove one of us mad, if we shou'd not agree to it; sho', don't suppose at the same time, I don't think you a very pretty creature; but I wou'd have you a wise one too.

Mir. Pray instruct me, fir.

Cun. Why, you know *Lucinda* and *Sir Gregory* are designed to marry one another, and have both a great deal of money; now you and I having very little, do you think it wou'd not be better, if you took *Sir Gregory*, and I *Lucinda*?

Mir. Nay, the thing wou'd be more reasonable, I confess; but how are they to be taken? That's the question.

Cun. As they do woodcocks, in a springe: rely you upon my conduct, I'll secure you the Knight; in the mean time you must help me to crack the shell of the lady's coyness, by wearing this favour.

Mir. Why, she sent it to you.

Cun. Therefore you must wear it—I find her a little hard in coming to, and have no way but jealousy, to extort a plain confession in my favour.

Mir. Well, I'll wear it, do you look to the consequence.

Cun. I'll warrant you—Now you have sense—Odso! here comes the Knight—meet me here in a quarter of an hour, I'll give instructions (that are infallible) about him.

Mir. Then I'll own you have sense. [Exit *Mir.*

Enter Sir Gregory.

Sir Greg. O dear *Cunningham*! I am overjoy'd I have found thee; I have been hunting for thee, till I'm all over in a sweat.

Cun. What's the matter, sir?

Sir Greg. O man! I want some more of thy friendly advice—I have got a diamond here, which I dare as well be burn'd as keep, and for the heart's blood of me, I don't know where to find its master.

Cun. No; that's hard, faith!

Sir Greg. It does belong to somebody, I'm sure—A plague on him, wou'd he had it, for I'm all over in a bath while 'tis about me, and she that sent it too is so damnable waspish, I had as good run my eyes into the fire, as look her in the face till I have parted with it.

Cun. Ha! from *Lucinda*, my life on't—let's see.—[*Looking on the Ring.*] O ho! my friend, have I found you, faith—I'gad this was lucky.

Sir Greg. Hah! What, dear *Cunningham*!

Cun. Do you see that little flaw in the corner sparkle, sir?

Sir Greg. Where! where, pray?

Cun. Why there, just at the south-east end of the north-angle.

Sir Greg. O la! ay, I see't now.

Cun. 'Tis this is that very ring, fir, that so much blood is threatened to be shed for.

Sir Greg. Hah!

[Frighted.

Cun. A tun at least.

Sir Greg. O la! why that's more than a man has in his whole body.

Cun. What a prodigious escape have you had, that this should fall first into my hands?

Sir Greg. O dear, ay! Well, am I discharg'd on't then?

Cun. My life for yours, now, fir—— [Draws.

Sir Greg. O la! What are you a-doing?

Cun. What a man of prudence shou'd do, fir—— stand upon my guard while I have it about me—— let him come to my face, I dare the rascal.

Sir Greg. Well! what a comfort 'tis to have a friend behind one's back: I swear, dear *Cunningham*, I am almost aghast to see thee venture thy life thus for me: Ods-heart! my blood rises to see thy courage. Od! I'll draw, and stand by thee, though I fright myself never so much for't.

Cun. By no means, fir: more than one to one's a dishonourable feat.

Sir Greg. I' my conscience I shall owe my life to thee.

Cun. You over-rate my service, fir——tho' I own I have been thinking of a thing that wou'd really deserve your thanks. Suppose, fir, I should get your mistress for you?

Sir Greg. Ah! dear friend, there I'm afraid thy good-will's bigger than thy wit.

Cun. Why, does she abuse you still, fir?

Sir Greg. O most damnably! Every time worse than other: and yet that old fool, Sir *Oliver*, thinks as confidently the day holds on *Tuesday*, as if she did not wish me at the devil: fir, she's so familiarly us'd to call me names, that, I believe, in the very church ceremony, she'd say, *I, such a one, take thee Rogue to be my wedded Rascal.*

Cun. Well, sir, dare you leave all to me yet?

Sir Greg. Faith that's just leaving nothing to thee—— for I have no more hopes of her, than a drummer has of a regiment——I may put her in mind of her duty, but I shall never command her.

Cun. I'll warrant you, sir, I have a device shall contract her to you, whether she will or no, and that when she least thinks on't.

Sir Greg. That's the only way, indeed; for if ever she thinks on't, you'll as soon persuade a bear to the stake, or a gaming lord to wave his privilege to a tradesman.

Cun. She seems kind in publick, at least?

Sir Greg. O la! yes, sir, before company she'll wheedle, coax, and lye, like a miss to her keeper; but in private she is as wild, as fierce and curst as a cat in a garret.

Cun. Still the greater will my friendship prove—— Look you, sir, here's a letter which I had just writ to her in your behalf, give it yourself, and if you don't immediately find an abatement of her severity to you, say I have deceiv'd you.

Sir Greg. I'll give it her this minute——and if thou makest thy words good, I'll give it under my hand, that thou hast more wit than a conjuror—— [Exit.

Cun. Ha! ha! how greedily the gudgeon gobbles a cheat!

Enter Mirabel.

O! you are come in time.

Mir. Well, sir, what success?

Cun. Follow the Knight, watch him close; you'll see him give a letter presently from me to the lady; when she has read it, do you enter, and ask him if he has not one for you, which, as he well may, he'll certainly deny; no matter, do you affirm he has, and from that hint, work up her jealousy; yet seem fearful of discovering names, till you affect a prudence in retiring.

Mir. What a malicious creature do you make me?

Cun. What a faint wou'd you make yourself now? Can you make me believe you don't a little naturally hate a woman that has said you have a face as brown and rough as a *French roll*; and tho' you have been beating up for a husband these two years, yet you have not rais'd one man that wou'd ever put you to the question?

Mir. Did you hear her say so?

Cun. And ten people more, at the same time.

Mir. Better be beating up for a husband, than beaten down to the price of the first man that does ask her the question, as she is by you, sir.

Cun. Poor spiteful animal! [*Aside.*] Look ye, madam, the more liberty you take with her, the sooner you finish my prospect, and give me leisure to bring yours to perfection.

Mir. I shall return the liberties she takes, I believe.

Cun. The way's before you.

Mir. Away! Hah! hah! [*Exit.*]

Cun. So! she's in fine order for my business, which, barring the Devil's stepping in between, I think can't fail—Hey-dey! What have we here! Another fool, the very spawn of his master, and, if possible, more ridiculous.

Enter Simple, fantastically dress'd.

Sim. Sir, I am your obedient, humble servant. Pray, sir, can you do me the favour to inform me how the party does?

Cun. The party! He takes me for a scrivener sure———Pray, sir, which of the parties do you mean?

Sim. Excuse me, sir, I name no names———but I am under some obligations to a certain party, and wou'd willingly bring matters to a conclusion; but, really, I don't find that I have heard from 'em.

Cun. Oh! upon my life, I know her.

Sim. Not from me, sir; you don't hear me name her; know what you can, talk a whole day with me, you'll be ne'er the wiser, you'll find nothing come from me, sir.

Cun. I dare say, sir, nobody will expect it; but,

really, you are so remarkably honourable in your amour, that all the world talks of your secrecy, I mean to Sir *Oliver's* niece, sir.

Sim. Sir, you astonish me! I thought all the world had known her name was a secret.

Cun. That's the reason so many people whisper it, sir.

Sim. Well, sir, they can't say it came from my lips, however: But, sir, I have been inform'd in my late retir'd walks, 'twixt *Paddington* and *Pancrafts*, that these have been certain favours and tokens sent me from the party, (whom you can witness I never nam'd) and these tokens, sir, really have never come near me.

Cun. How! Pray, sir, what were the tokens?

Sim. A love-knot and a diamond, sir——Really, the thing is not well——I am apprehensive of some dishonourable practice against me.

Cun. Sir, your apprehension's good, and if you'll take my word, Sir *Gregory* is the man that wrongs you; mere spite and envy of your success with his mistress: for when you were at *Paddington*, he intercepted the gifts at *Pancrafts*.

Sim. Traytor! His mistress too! Poor animal! He had never known what it was to appear like a gentleman, but that I sometimes, in pure friendship, us'd to dress him——Sir, do you think I ought not to demand the combat of him?

Cun. 'Tis he the wrong deserves it, sir; but if you cou'd be reveng'd on him without that hazard, wou'd it not be better?

Sim. Sir, I fear no hazard, where the honour of the party is concern'd: besides, I know him to be a rank coward.

Cun. Nay, then a man might venture: But how will the lady bear the apprehension of your danger?

Sim. Why, really, that gives me some concern; and 'tis possible the fright might kill her; therefore I don't know if a private revenge wou'd not do the thing altogether as well. Pray, sir, what was your proposal?

Cun. Why thus, sir; I have already promis'd to contract him to Mrs. *Lucinda*, your mistress, by a device;

now when he thinks he has bobb'd you of the lady, you shall stand behind the arras, and be a witness of his being bobb'd, by my putting a false lady upon him.

Sim. Sir, destroy me, but this wou'd make me laugh immoderately.

Cun. We'll fob him, fir, here's my hand on't.

Sim. Sir, no person alive wou'd be more transported to see him well fobb'd, than myself: But now you talk of fobbing, fir; really, I must tell you, I begin to wonder why the lady does not send for me, as well as to me, according to her word of honour; for, I protest, I have kept out of town (to keep my word) these two days,—on purpose to be sent for: And, really, upon my credit—I am almost starv'd with walking.

Cun. O! walking gets a stomach, fir.

Sim. Ay, but then it gets one no provisions, fir; not but I had a stomach too, but then I lost it again, and got it again, as often, fir, as a man shall get and lose the fight of *Paul's*, in a walk to *Chelsea*.

Cun. Why don't you go to her yourself, fir?

Sim. Sir, there's a trifle call'd a vow has pass'd between us to the contrary, which renders the thing impossible: But, fir, shall I beg the favour of you, if you meet the lady's footman running before her empty coach, in an orange-tawny livery, that you wou'd direct him and the horses now to *Islington*, for I can't but think she will send for me yet.

Cun. Sir, I'll certainly do it — You are going thither?

Sim. This very minute, fir, and shall not return till sent for; and there he'll certainly find me, looking upon the pipes and whistling. [Exit.]

Cun. Ha! ha! A pretty amusement for a lover truly, tho' I think there's but little difference in the best of us. But now to my own affair — The favour and the ring give me fair hopes, indeed —

*They shou'd be signs of her affection's truth,
But I must still pursue my surer proof.*

[Exit.]

Enter Niece, and Sir Gregory.

Niece. A letter for me! 'tis impossible! Nobody of common sense cou'd suppose I'd receive it from thy hands——Why wilt thou follow me, to provoke me still to abuse thee?

Sir Greg. Look ye, forsooth, don't you be too huffy neither, lest upon reading that letter you shou'd find reason to think better of me, and then look like a fool for a' the confident things you have said and done to me.

Niece. Prithee, dear ideot, don't have so much assurance——is it not enough I do thee the grace to receive this from thy hands, (a thing that almost makes me sick to do) but you must talk too?

Sir Greg. Well, well, Mrs. *Frumps*, do you read the letter, pray, and then your tongue will run another tune, I believe.

Niece. Stand away——farther——farther yet——you ill manner'd changeling——did not you see I was going to read it?

Sir Greg. Oh! oh! I may stay in your sight at least; you did n't use to endure me in the same room: the very superscription has done some good upon you, I see.

Niece. Ha! 'tis *Cunningham's* hand! But what an odd direction 'tis——*To the fairest in the family*——I think I may venture to take it to myself without vanity——I wrong his wit to doubt it. How pleasant 'tis to make this fool the mutual messenger of our amorous secrets, and his own disquiet. [*Afide.*]

Sir Greg. O ho! she nods at me already: Ah! it will all come in time.

Niece. Is it possible thou canst laugh yet? I wou'd have undertook to have kill'd a spider with less venom than I have spit at thee.

Sir Greg. Pshaw! I don't mind you now, mun. Read your letter, will you?

Niece. Back then, owl's-face——[*Reads.*] *Take*

it as a proof of love, that for your sake I mortify another's vanity: A folly that needs but little art to flatter it, and yet, if rightly us'd, may serve——

Sir Ol. [*Within.*]——My Niece? why there she is, in the next room.

Niece. Ha! my Uncle's coming!——Sir Gregory! why do you keep that distance? You did not use to be so strange!

Sir Greg. Ah, ah, ah your servant, forsooth! What, is your proud stomach come down then? And now, madam, I have a word or two to throw in your ear—Look you, madam, in the first place—I——

Niece. He don't come yet; why thou saucy issue of some marching grenadier! how darest thou offer to come near me, tho' I call'd thee? I'll make thee know, that to obey's as criminal as to contradict me.

Sir Greg. Ads-heart, madam! you'll find I won't take things as I have done: I'll contradict you in spite of your teeth, and obey you to plague you, and you shall obey me, tho' I plague myself; for I'll marry you whether you will or no; nay, tho' I have no mind to it myself: only for the trick's sake, I'll trick, madam, and make you as miserable a wife, as you wou'd me a horrible husband; and there's the resolution of a provok'd lover, that in pure revenge will throw himself away upon you. [*Going.*]

Niece. The fool begins to talk reason,

Enter Mirabel.

Mir. Sir Gregory, your servant! Pray, sir, have you no letter for me?

Sir Greg. Not I, madam—I brought one from Mr. Cunningham to Mrs. Miserable there, that shall be, and so your servant. [*Exit.*]

Mir. I am afraid, madam, Sir Gregory has made a mistake, and given you my letter.

Niece. Ha! what do I see! the very favour I sent him; I am confounded——but will seem as unconcern'd as she. [*Afide.*] You have a mighty pretty ribbon there—the very same—Pray where might you buy it?

Mir. Really, madam, I don't know—I was only defined by a friend to wear it——But had you any letter tho'?

Niece. Yes—I vow 'tis very pretty——some lover's present, I presume.

Mir. One that would have me think he's a lover—But pray, madam, was there not some mistake in that letter?

Niece. My heart's too full to answer her—I'll give it her, and seem ignorant of all——O dear, yes, he gave me a letter, I cou'd not imagine from whom—I have open'd it too, and if you had not come, was just going to read it.

Mir. Nay, there's no harm, madam. [*Reads to herself.*]

Niece. Can he then be the villain that he seems? He is—The subject of the letter too confirms him so. Where's all my pride of spirit now, that ought to tear him from my heart? Abus'd, and made the slave, the property of another's hope! Confusion! how she smiles in triumph o'er my folly!

Cunningham at the door.

Cun. So! my mine succeeds, I see! The Train has taken; 'twill bounce anon.

Mir. Ha! ha! ha!

Niece. O torture to my face! sure she dares not own her treachery. Your letter seems to please you, madam?

Mir. Yes, truly, I can't but laugh to see how some people's vanity exposes 'em; and how ridiculously women of little or no beauty will rail at those that really have it.

Niece. Has any body rail'd at you, madam?

Mir. Um——a little! My features did not please 'em, it seems. My face was only a *French* roll or so——Ha! ha! ha!

Niece. Ha! the very words I said to *Cunningham*! Betray me too!

Mir. And yet the person that they thought liked theirs

better, is fool enough; it seems to find something in my face, that they have not, poor creature! ha! ha! ha!

Niece. He's here! he dares not own it sure.

Cunningham enters.

Cun. I hope, madam, you receiv'd my letter? [*To Mir.*

Mir. I had this moment read it, sir.

Niece. Nay then, he dares do any thing——The proof's too plain.

Cun. And may flatter myself that my expectation's answer'd?

Mir. If that Lady's uneasiness is any evidence, you may.

Cun. Then you think I may laugh securely?

Mir. Ay, and heartily! ha! ha! ha!

Cun. Ha! ha! ha!

Niece. Ungrateful! perjur'd wretch!

Cun. Madam!

Niece. O! thou hast wrong'd the tenderest heart that ever listen'd to the faithless vows of man.

Cun. I had little reason to think so from the encouragement I saw you give two fools before my face.

Niece. I learnt from thee before that servile artifice of dissembling: but tell me, was I then credulous and vain, to think your vows sincere? O! I had fill'd the measure of my hopes in thee, my duty, interest, friends, and fortune not consider'd, when thy supposed fidelity deserv'd 'em.

Cun. Suppose me then no more the thing I seem'd; but as my heart, my hopes, and tenderest wishes would create me, yours sincerely, and only yours. I knew there was no other way at once to give my hopes a certainty——but this, this innocent deceit of seeming false to stir your jealousies; and if you don't applaud the stratagem, you wrong the heart you now complain'd of.

Niece. Is't possible?

Mir. Ev'n so indeed, madam, and if you don't pardon my part of the jest we made of you——I'll swear you'll allow nobody wit but yourself.

Niece. Well! you have fool'd me fairly; but how shall I make you amends? —

Cun. That's easily done; you shall make me a husband, and I have engag'd Sir Gregory shall make her another; when I am a little recover'd from the surprize of my good fortune, I'll tell you.

Thus tho' ador'd, the fair-one falsely coy,

That would with doubts the lover's hope destroy,

Once touch'd with jealousy confirms his joy.

[*Exeunt.*



A C T V.

SCENE, Cunningham's Lodgings.

Enter Cunningham, Y. Outwit, Priscian, and Sir Threadbare.

Cun. You'll pardon me, dear *Outwit*, that I did not before trust you with my design upon your Cousin *Lucinda*: but since you have told me how I may serve you in this new attempt upon your father, I have not now the least fear or doubt remaining:

Y. Out. Faith, I can't blame your caution, in so critical a point; but I am glad I have it in my power to serve you, not only for our old acquaintance sake, but the pleasure too of biting my father; nay, I'll make him pay the very music to your wedding: is the concert ready, Knight?

Sir Ybr. Oh, sir, we are half the concert ourselves; we two are the tabor and pipe, that must make his purse dance out of his pocket.

Prif. Yes, Sir, you'll find us *ſ cantare pares, ſ reſpondere parati.*

Y. Out. Say, you so, my lads! faith we'll sing Harvest-home with a melodious horn-pipe.

Sir Thr. My wife has engag'd to bring the Ladies.

Y. Out. And I'll undertake the young coxcombs shall follow 'em.

Sir Thr. But 'tis time, gentlemen, we were tuning our instruments.

Y. Out. Let's away from the back door. Adieu.

Pris. *Fistula dulce canit, volucres dum decipit aucups.*

[Exit Y. Out. Sir Thr. and Pris.]

Enter Servants with a Banquet.

Cun. So! very well——Reach me the 'black gown——Are none of the guests come yet?

Serv. Yes, sir, I believe there's one below in the parlour now.

Cun. What is he?

Serv. Really, sir, I can't be positive; but I suspect him to be a fool, that some pawn-broker's old-fashion cloaths have made half a gentleman: I think he said his name was *Simple*.

Cun. The very person I wanted, shew him up immediately.

Serv. He's here, sir.

Cun. Ah! Monsieur *Simple*! most opportunely welcome! You are come in the very crisis of your revenge; I expect Sir *Gregory* every minute! Well, how is it?

Sim. Perish me, sir, if I am not in a very untoward condition, for between love, and cold and hunger, and one thing or other, I am really almost starv'd, sir,——Pray, sir, has not this unkind lady sent for me yet?

Cun. Truly, not that I hear, sir! I fancy there's some unfriendly messenger employ'd between you.

Sim. Why then it must be so; for in all appearances, I'm positive the lady must be a person of honour; and could not have so little wit, as to think to make a fool of me——But really I was never so cold since

my first peeping into the world; that river is excessive bleak, and in my conscience, I have been seven miles in length upon the banks of it; where really, sir, I believe I have not teen less than five thousand sticklebacks. And I am really of opinion, that there are gudgeons too——Miller's thumbs I saw in vast quantities, I believe I told above fourscore——I'll make a little bold with your sweet-meats.

Cun. And welcome, sir.

Sim. 'Tis strange now, I have really no-taste in any thing.

Cun. O! love, sir, distracts every thing, but itself.
[*Servant whispers.*] 'Udsol! I have news for you.

Sim. For me! what is it, for this plum's sake?

Cun. Nay, hear me, sir.

Sim. I'll warrant you, sir, I have two ears to one mouth, I hear more than I eat, sir——

Cun. Sir Gregory's come, and you shall see him fobb'd immediately.

Sim. No! that would be an immoderate pleasure.

Cun. Stand unseen there but two minutes, and I'll find an opportunity to call you in, and place you at the table with the lady I design to sham upon him.

Sim. Sir——could not I drink first?

Cun. By and bye, I'll put her health to you——
Here he comes, away.

Enter Sir Gregory.

Sir Gregory! your most faithful, humble servant. This is indeed the greatest honour was ever done to my poor habitation.

Sir Greg. Phoo! prithee pex of compliments, man, I'll do thee this honour every day of the week when I'm married, but my head's upon other things now; for to tell you the truth, I am up to the ears in love and spite.

Cun. Soft! the lady's in the next room——if she should hear you, all's unravell'd.

Sir Greg. Ad! 'twas well you told me; for I was

just going to bawl out how terribly I should laugh at her, when I got her, whether she will or no.

Cun. Oh! but don't use her too severely, neither.

Sir Greg. No, no, I'll only vex her a little, or so.

Cun. Hang it, s'en forgive her all.

Sir Greg. No, faith! I must crab her, she must be vinegar'd! I long dearly to fetch a little verjuice out of her; for you know she has been dampably saucy to me.

Cun. O! you'll soon tame her.

Sir Greg. So I will, faith; for before I bed her, I'll very fairly see her legs tied to the two bottom posts, her hands to the head-board, and a gag in her mouth, that she may neither kick, bite, bawl, scratch, nor run away.

Cun. For all this, I shall see you and your lady live as quietly as two tortoises.

Sir Greg. Nay, it's all one to me, whether we do or no; she may be a tortoise, for aught I know; at the bottom; but hitherto, I am sure, I have seen nothing of it in her, but a damn'd thick shell.

Cun. Well, fir! now to the proof on't ———
[*Soft Musick.*] That's the signal of her approach——
Come, fir, get into this gown with me, put your right hand through this sleeve——Mind you your part, and I'll warrant her your own.

Sir Greg. Well, faith! this will be pure! Now I begin to smoak it; do you place her in that chair, and I warrant you, I'll grope her out.

Cun. Here she comes——lie still.

Enter Mirabel.

Lady, this homely roof and coarser entertainment are too much honour'd by so fair a presence; but where sincere affections are both host and guest, the place takes little from their full delight.

Enter Simple.

This only friend I have made bold t'invite, to be the private witness of our contracted faith.

Mir. Your friend's most welcome, fir; and when our hands are link'd in that firm chain, that must unite us ever, Fame shall bely my virtue, if e'er it speaks me but an obedient wife; in witness of this truth, I yield my hand.

Cun. And thus devoutly I receive it.

Mir. O! you grasp me, fir, too hard.

Cun. Think it but a lover's zeal, and pardon it.

[*Aside.*

Mir. Poor Sir Gregory! methinks I pity him! how strangely would he rave to see this interview!

Cun. O! you're still too much concern'd for him: you know he gave his interest up to me, and shou'd you pity one that flights you?

Mir. That thought, indeed, revives my resolution
———No more delays then, but for ever make me yours.

Cun. Thus, then——

Sim. Hold, fir, begging your fair lady's pardon too
———give me leave first, at least, in one friendly flowing glass, to particularize my separate satisfaction, that I conceive at this time in your united felicity, and that ridiculous animal Sir Gregory's eternal disappointment.

Mir. Since 'tis your friend's proposal, fir, I pledge it.

[*Drinks.*

Cun. 'Tis kindly offer'd.

Sim. Destroy me, but such a banquet once a week, wou'd make me grow fat in a fortnight.

[*Aside.*

But pray, fir, now proceed in your ceremony.

Cun. Thus then——*Before the sacred Powers above,
I join this plighted hand in bonds of love;
And with this hand the heart that owns the same,
To burn for ever in this sacred flame:
With hand and heart I yield my fortune too,
And all the rights that to a wife are due;
And this firm vow for mutual life shall stand,
Irrevocably seal'd with heart and hand.*

Sim. Well, now I could walk bare-foot to Berwick.

and back again, and laugh at this jest all the way, without halting.

[*Afide.*]

Mir. Thus too—*Before the sacred Powers above,*
I join this plighted hand in bonds of love :
And with this hand the heart that owns the same,
To burn for ever in this sacred flame :
With hand and heart I yield my fortune too,
And all the rights that are a husband's due :
And this firm vow for mutual life shall stand,
Irrevocably seal'd with heart and hand.

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! ha! Faith, and so it shall, madam, for here's the hand that owns the heart that you have sworn to obey.

Cun. And, faith, Sir Gregory, here's witness of the contract.

Sir Greg. Now, now, what names have you to call me, pray?

Mir. Husband, sir.

Sir Greg. [*Coming out of the gown.*] Hah! Ods-nails! I am cheated, wrong'd, fool'd, abus'd.

Sim. Extremely fobb'd, indeed, sir.

Cun. Why, did not I tell you, sir, you shou'd find her another woman?

Sim. Nay, she is not the same, Knight——I can witness; ha! ha!

Sir Greg. What the devil, have you brought my own man to laugh in my face too?——Sir, since she is not the same, I must tell you, I'll have another, if there were but another lady in *Europe*: You'll find, sir, that I won't be married in blind-man's-buff.

Cun. Why 'twas your own agreement, sir——
 And if you knew the care I have taken of you, you'd down of your knees and thank your stars it was no worse.

Sir Greg. A fire of my stars, I did not care if my stars were all of a light blaze. I am sure I may thank you that 'tis as bad as it is.

Cun. Are not you ashamed! Your very inhumanity has drawn tears from the lady.

Mir. Ah me! Is this the promise of my hopes?

Why was I flatter'd with imaginary joy? Must I suffer for another's fault? Is pride; perverseness, and ill usage then the only way to conquer men's affections? If tears; submission, gentleness, and obedience have no charms, my merit's poor indeed, and I deserve the slights that I foresee must fall on me.

Sir Greg. Why, faith, upon second thoughts, this is something civilier than *Rogue* and *Rascal*.

Cun. Ods-precious! Madam, dry your eyes for shame! I have no longer patience to see such youth, beauty, and such virtue thrown away on one that never can deserve 'em.——Go, sir, return again to her that knows you better; that gives you language fitter for you; that means to treat you to your merit; to abuse, to baffle and disgrace you: *Fool, Slave, Rascal; Monster*, is the converse you delight in: We sell no such wares; if you look here for blows, and full-mouth'd curses, you are deceiv'd; pray, seek elsewhere——Meekness, obedience, virtue, are the goods we deal in.

Sim. And, pray, sir, has not your wisdom yet discover'd the party, for whose sake the other lady so horribly abus'd you? ha! ha!

Sir Greg. Why, you little sorry son of a——Hark-ye; *Cunningham*, do but make half as much a fool of that whole *Jackanapes* for laughing at me, and let things go as they will——Here's my hand, I'll forgive thee all over. [Aside.]

Cun. O fie! sir, your mind can't be so soon alter'd. You'll like no woman that won't sling a slipper in your face, break your head with a fan-handle, or bore your nose with a silver bodkin.

Mir. These qualities you'll never find in me: but in a fond obedient wife, the readiest and the humblest servant.

Cun. 'Death! but he shall not, madam; let his gross Ignorance feel the loss of you——I've a thought will do; I'll disannul the contract yet, and see you better married.

Sir Greg. 'Slife! but you shall not, sir, [Taking

H 2

her hand from him.] she's mine, and I am her's; and as long as we are one another's, according to law, let me see the man that dares divide us: If you are my friend, fir, prove it; and don't pretend to do me a good turn, and then hit me o' the teeth with it. I am sure, considering how damnable ill I succeeded with the other, this lady can't blame me for being a little cautious at first.

Mir. If it were only caution, fir, indeed I cannot blame you.

Cun. Nay, fir, get the lady's consent, and I have no objection——

Sir Greg. Lady's consent! so I have, fir——— Look-ye here, fir———[*Kisses her.*] there's my first proof of love to her———And now, madam, to stop the mouth of my friend's impertinence for ever, give me a round smack, as a proof of your love to me. [*She kisses him.*] There's for you, fir; are you satisfied now, fir?

Cun. Nay, now I own your wit too hard for mine; indeed you have carried her in spite of me.

Sim. And now, fir, I hope you'll own there are ladies that may be carry'd too in spite of other people; ha! ha!

Sir Greg. Ay, but it must be when thou'rt her coachman then, for if ever thou carriest a lady, without horses to help thee, I'll be bound to be a hack-driver as long as I live.

Sim. Sir, there are persons, indeed, that are ridiculous, and very obnoxious to ladies, and such fools, indeed, do mis of 'em——

Cun. Nay, no dissention here, I beseech you, gentlemen——*Mr. Simple*, I'll do your business effectually——

Sim. Sir, I'm convinc'd that my conduct has deserv'd it even of the lady herself, fir.

Cun. *Sir Gregory*, hark-ye——you shall laugh at him very speedily——

Sir Greg. Ha! ha!

Cun. In the mean time, I have still contriv'd

you a new and better revenge upon your other mistress.

Sir Greg. How! how! Dear rogue, my spleen's on tip-toe at the very thoughts on't,

Cun. Why, let your contract with this lady be yet conceal'd; and to her uncle, still support a face of seeming inclination to her, which will make him so eager for the match, that he'll e'en force her to offer herself to you: then you may burst into a laugh in his face, turn upon your heel to her, and bid her look for a husband where there is a man fool enough to be so. Thus you humble her proud stomach, return her coyness with contempt, and treble all your late disgraces upon her shame; and let your bride, her rival's virtue, triumph o'er her falshood and her folly.

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! and if I don't do it, say I have no more spleen than a cucumber. Faith, and I'll plague the old fellow too, for he has us'd me almost as severely as his Niece. Come, madam, let's to bed, and so to church, as fast as ever we can drive:

And then, madam Minx to her sorrow shall see,

What a husband she's as lost in missing of me:

How my spleen will be tickled, when she finds that
to flout her,

I have bobbed her proud heart, and am married without her.

[Exit Sir Gregory and Mirabel.

Cun. Why, how now, friend? What, in a brown study?

Sim. Well, sir, lovers indeed must have patience. I'll e'en take another turn by the *New-River*, where, if love were not an enemy to laughter, the thoughts of your fooling the Knight wou'd at least be a two hours entertainment to me: but I think now of borrowing an angle-rod to pass away the time with; you know my walk, sir; if she sends, you'll certainly find me upon the same bank, just by the eddy, fishing for Millers-Thumbs. [Exit.

Cun. I'll certainly take care, sir———

Enter Y. Outwit.

Hah! *Outwit*? Well, how go squares?

Y. Out. Bravely, boy! All's a-foot: the Knight's lady has prevail'd with my cousin, your mistress, upon an assurance that you will meet her there; and she has wheedled the old Governess to go with her; and they are all now at the masquerade, in the next street; upon which I have alarm'd my father, that Sir *Gregory* is fallen off, for neglects, and ill usage, and that he is now violently bent upon a rich widow, (whom the Knight's lady must personate) and to complete his revenge, is resolv'd, unless suddenly prevented, to marry her immediately: Now this, sir, will make my father eager, at any rate, to recover Sir *Gregory*, whom, by a mark, and the change of one another's coats, you are to personate; and so disguis'd, you carry off your mistress, and ev'n cheat the old Governess to assist you.

Cun. Admirable! But where's the old Knight, your father?

Y. Out. I left him in the street, stopping a coach, with the windows up, upon suspicion that Sir *Gregory* was in the inside on't, and so took that opportunity to step up, and prepare you for our next scene—
Here he comes.

Cun. I am ready for him.

Enter Sir Oliver.

Sir Ol. Mr. *Cunningham*, your servant: Pray, sir, can you tell me any news of Sir *Gregory*?

Cun. No, really, sir, but what I suppose your son has told you, that he's certainly gone off.

Sir Ol. But what shou'd be the reason, think you?

Y. Out. Shall I tell it you over again, sir? I tell you he's bewitch'd; my cousin's ill usage, and your slack performance of your promise, have quite

turn'd his brain, and, if you don't immediately think of some expedient to recover him, with full hopes of his marrying your Niece out of hand, you'll find him marry'd to the widow before to-morrow morning.

Sir Ol. Ah! cou'd we but find him, I'd secure him my Niece.

Y. Out. Assure him but of that, sir, I dare yet undertake to recover the Knight; for, to tell you the truth, he has invited me to his wedding, and I am this moment trusted with their very place of meeting.

Sir Ol. Nay, then, all's whole again; we have him; for I have already sent to my Niece, to prepare herself to marry him within this half hour——Come, come, we'll call upon Doctor *Double-Chin* as we go, whip up the ceremony, and tack 'em together like a new pair of stockings.

Y. Out. Right, sir: but one of the stockings is mine: Now since you have already bargain'd for yours, I shall not part with the other without a valuable consideration.

Sir Ol. What dost thou mean?

Y. Out. That my Knight, sir, is the fellow to your Niece; and if you sell him her, I must sell you him.

Sir Ol. 'Pthah, prithee, why, you fil'y rogue, dost thou think I won't consider thee?

Y. Out, Sir, you need not give yourself that trouble; I'll consider myself; for having nothing but my wits to live by, I am resolv'd not to starve by being a fool.

Cun. This is no time to haggle with him, sir.

Sir Ol. Why the rogue is in the right, and I will encourage him; I love ingenuity——there, sirrah, there's subsistence for the vices of a whole fortnight——Come, come along.

Y. Out. I can't stir one step, if these two pieces are not immediately made twenty.

H 4

Cun. Strike him quickly, fir, before he raises his price.

Sir Ol. Raises the Devil! who shall raise the money? —

Y. Out. Every word you speak, fir, is a whole pound out of your way: now I must have one-and-twenty.

Cun. I told you how 'twou'd be, fir.

Sir Ol. Why, you impudent son of a——

Y. Out. Another, fir——twenty-two.

Sir Ol. Um!

Y. Out. Have a care you don't reason with me, 'twill undo you.

Cun. You see his humour, fir: faith e'en let him have it, tho' you fling it at his head——the thing's richly worth an hundred, fir. [*Afide.*]

Sir Ol. [*Afide.*] Why, dost thou think I don't know that? I am biting him all this while——There, firrah, there's your money: nay, prithee, don't lose more time to count it.

Y. Out. Always tell money after your father, fir.

Enter a Servant hastily.

Sir Ol. How now?

Serv. O! Sir, Mrs. *Lucinda* is no where to be found; we have enquir'd up and down, searched high and low; she went out with a strange lady, fir, and the old Governess, and left word with Mrs. *Mary*, that if your honour enquir'd for her, she believ'd she shou'd never come home again.

Sir Ol. Undone, undone! all's blown up again.

Y. Out. The money's right, fir.

Cun. This is a misfortune, indeed, fir.

Sir Ol. Ah! son! son! now shew thyself my son: help at this pinch, and I'll——

Y. Out. Count me out thirty pieces more, fir——without delay——take my word too for deserving

tem, for I must begin to have some regard now to my credit, fir——Quick, fir, or I don't bate you a shilling of forty.

Can. Faith, fir, this is downright extortion, I am really asham'd——I wou'd not give it him.

Sir Ol. You wou'd not give it him!——Then you'd lose a thousand pound, fir——There, there 'tis, bring me but my Niece; if it is not right, I'll double the sum.

Y. Out. Then observe, fir, your Niece is now in masquerade at *Lady Revel's*, which is the general rendezvous of all the young coxcombs in town: she has an amour a-foot there, to my knowledge, that you don't know of, and very probably intends, this night, to make a fashionable end on't.

Sir Ol. The Devil!

Y. Out. Suspend your wonder, fir: You'd recover her, wou'd not you?

Sir Ol. O! dear son, at any rate, at any rate.

Y. Out. Then observe, fir; we three, with such help as may be necessary, will all enter upon 'em disguis'd, (for nobody bare-fac'd is admitted) pretending to be a sort of anti-mask, and so, at a proper opportunity (which I'll contrive) we may carry her off.

Sir Ol. Won't this masking take up too much time tho'?

Y. Out. Sir, they never stir thence till morning: and for disguises, I can fit you in a quarter of an hour.

Sir Ol. Well, well, is there any thing else wanting?

Y. Out. Only the charge of good music, fir; it must be good, that we and our design may pass the less suspected; and I can provide you that, fir, if you'll give your word, before this gentleman, to pay it.

Sir Ol. There's my hand, cost what it will; get the best in the kingdom, I'll pay it all.

Y. Out. That's all you shall pay, upon my word, fir.

Can. [*Aside.*] And a good round sum, upon my word, fir.

Sir Ql. Let's away; let's away.

[*Exeunt.*]

Gun. I neither doubt his friendship or his wit:

*But come the worst, if his attempt's o'erthrown,
My resolution then shall seize my own,*

*Enter in Masquerade Lady Gentry, Niece, Governess,
and Ladies.*

L. Gen. Come, ladies, Music shall give us now her airy welcome; 'twill be the best, I fear, this homely habitation can afford.

Niece. For me, alas! my welcome follows me, else I am ill come hither: you still assure me, madam, Mr. Cunningham will be here?

L. Gen. Madam, as on his life, depend on't.

Niece. Continue still to let the Governess believe Sir Gregory's the man we wait for.

Gov. I marvel, lady, the Knight's so slow in coming! Lovers o' th' latter age were wont to ride with spurs on.

L. Gen. He'll be here immediately——his music's come already, madam——He only stays to be perfect in some gallant device to appear with, that he has been beating his brains about.

Niece. Ah! poor man! he may beat 'em to pap before any thing comes out of 'em.

Gov. Well, well, you'll agree better one day.

Niece. Hardly two, I'm afraid.

Gov. Marriage will alter you,

Niece. I rather believe I shall alter my marriage.

[*Aside.*]

Gov. Nay, nay, I know you are for a man of wit, forsooth; A Cunningham, I warrant you, one that has no more honesty than a horse-courser, and as little conscience as an Apothecary's bill: A false, protesting wretch. In my heart, our women are all won with ill usage, now-a days.

L. Gen. Truly, and so are the men too, for aught I see.

Gow. Ay! in troth, you've hit it, lady——If true-heartedness were the thing, Mr. *Cunningham* might have prov'd himself an honest man afore now, and some folks never the worse for't.

L. Gen. Nay, men are indeed strange creatures.

Gow. Ah! they are no more what they were——

Niece. Than you can be what I am now, Governess.

Gow. Well, well, you'll be wiser one day.

Niece. I'd willingly be happy first, methinks.

Gow. Then Sir *Gregory's* the man must make you so; and say I tell you so.

Niece. If I do but manage him right, I hope he will.

L. Gen. Hark, I hear his music; this must be he.

[*Flourish.*]

Enter Sir Oliver, T. Outwit, Cunningham in Sir Gregory's cloaths, all masked, Sir Threadbare and Priscian as Musicians, &c. who take out the Ladies to dance.

So, so, our company's well increas'd! What say you to a dance, ladies?

Niece. What say you, Governess?

Gow. Nay, nay, not I, in troth——my jaunting days are done.

Sir Ol. Come, come, widow, you won't spoil good company, sure! We'll have one round in honour of sixty-three. Ah! you can foot it still, if you were but well stirr'd.

Gow. Well, well, a civil word makes me do any thing.

Sir Ol. That I dare swear, by your bringing my Niece hither, with a pox to you.

[*Aside.*]

Cun. I think, *Lucinda!*

Niece. *Cunningham!*

Cun. The same, fear nothing.

Niece. Why, where's the danger?

Cun. Your uncle's here.

Niece. You make me tremble.

Cun. Be easy, he's drawn into the plot against himself.

Y. Out. That's your Niece, fir; *Cunningham* has secured her already.

Sir Ol. I see't: we have caught her, i'faith, boy.

Y. Out. Will you allow me wit now, father?

Sir Ol. Thou hast earn'd thy money faithfully, I must allow it.

Y. Out. I hope to give you a better proof on't yet, before night, fir.

Sir Ol. Let me but get over this plunge, and I'll allow thee any thing.

Y. Out. That I'll engage you shall, fir, before I have done with you.

Cun. At our second meeting in the dance, we loose our hands no more.

Niece. Are you prepared to join 'em?

Cun. The priest stays for us: has the Governess her lesson?

Niece. Yes, yes, she takes you for Sir Gregory, and will follow us.

Gov. Ah! well said, Sir Knight, stick close to her, and recover the time you've lost——We have staid this hour for you.

Cun. When you see us go off in the dance, I hope you'll go along with us?

Gov. Will I! What do you think I came hither for?

Sir Ol. Come, come, strike up, gentlemen.

[*All dance, at the latter end of which, Cunningham, Niece, L. Gen. and Governess Exit, and the music ceases.*]

Sir Ol. [*Dancing on*] Heydey! heydey! What, is the Music tir'd before us?

Sir Thr. No sure, note de company 'ave done, you see, and is be gone.

Sir Ol. Ha! who! what! Where's my Niece? Són! Son! my Niece! my Niece!

Y. Out. Are you mad, fir, to discover yourself? Did not you see *Cunningham* go off with her?

Sir Ol. Discover the Devil; don't tell me, fir; was

not I to have gone along with him? For aught I know, here may be a contrivance——Ha! I'gad I don't like your looks, I must tell you that, fir——By the world, I'll go after 'em. [*Going, Sir Thr. and Prif. stop him.*]

Sir Thr. Holda, fir, diabolò, you moste paye de mousique before you fall goe.

Sir Ol. Must! why how now, scoundrel!

Sir Thr. Me no ondraftanda what you will say de scoundrel. Me vil hava de money.

Sir Ol. Suppose I won't pay you these five hours?

Sir Thr.. Den you fall no be go dis five hores?

Sir Ol. Shalln't go, fir!

Sir Thr. No, diabolò, you no fall goe.

Sir Ol. Why, firrah, suppose I have a mind to make you play before me in the streets?

Sir Tha. I have maka no accord to play de street, I ava agree to play only at de ballat; if you no ava de minde to danca no more, you vil pay de money, de money will letta you goe.

Sir Ol. A pox on him for a sputtering——a——here, son, lay out; give 'em twelve pence a-piece, and let's be rid of 'em.

Y. Out. Twelve-pence! that's but a crown, fir!

Sir Thr. Una corona! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Ol. Yah, yah. Why, what a plague do you laugh at, fir? I believe a crown wou'd make you all laugh and dance too in your own country.

Y. Out. Sir, for your own sake laugh again, and say you only meant it as a jest, you'll be expos'd for ever else.

Sir Ol. Expose a rump, fir; I am not to be laugh'd out of my money.

Y. Out. Death! fir, they are all *Italians*.

Sir Ol. Why, what then, fir, mayn't an *Italian* be a scoundrel, as well as an *Englishman*?

Y. Out. Lord! fir, I wou'd not have this heard for the universe. Does not the whole nation adore 'em, fir? Is any man allowed common sense, among the better sort, that is not ravish'd with their musick! And

is any thing a more fashionable mark of a gentleman, than to pay an extravagant price for't?

Sir Ol. A pox of the fashion, sir, they'll get no such marks from me, I can tell you——If any thing in reason will satisfy 'em——let's know what 'tis——for I'm in haste.

Y. Out. I'll try what I can do with 'em, sir.

Sir Ol. [*To himself.*] What cou'd they mean by going off without me? Unless my Niece discover'd my being here, and so ran away out of fear——that's the best I can hope of it; ——if not, I am chous'd, and that rogue, my son, is at the bottom of it.

Y. Out. Nay, but gentlemen, bate us but one ten pound.

Sir Ol. How! bate ten pound! why, what the devil's the whole sum then?

Y. Out. Why, sir, they are five of them, and it seems they never strike a note under twenty guineas a man.

Sir Ol. Twenty hang-dogs!

Y. Out. And, faith, there's no making 'em bate a shilling, sir.

Sir Ol. Oons! do they know what they say, why that's a hundred guineas?

Y. Out. How, sir! a hundred! what at——hah! five of 'em at twenty——let's see——um——um——four-score——'gad 'tis a hundred, sir. But we had not time to make a bargain with 'em: fith, sir, I see no remedy, you pass'd your word to pay 'em.

Sir Tbr. Diobolo! For vate is all'dis, doe nothing? Me vill be no afronta——me vill ava de money, or you fall ava my life——taka your spada. [*Draws.*]

Y. Out. Have a care, sir.

Sir Ol. Hoity-toity! O your servant, gentlemen! What, I am to be robb'd then, it seems. I beg your pardon ——I took you for fiddlers, but I find by your tools you are gentlemen of another trade ——Very good! There's your money, sir——as fairly robb'd, I yield it ——but to ask a hundred pound with five fiddlesticks in your hands, was an im-

pudence ten times beyond it—These are thieves, firrah
~~and~~ highwaymen, and I am robb'd.

Y. Out. Indeed, musicians, fir, and you are only
bobb'd; for cost what it wou'd, 'twas your own agree-
ment to pay 'em.

Sir Ol. Yes, yes, and you have provided 'em with
admirable instruments, I thank you.

Y. Out. Sir, the gentlemen are taking their leaves.

Sir Ol. O your servant! your servant, gentlemen
——You are damnably well bred, I must confess——
but 'tis no matter, somebody shall pay for't; let me but
recover my Niece, and Sir Gregory shall find it all in his
bill, faith.

Enter Governess.

Gov. O! Sir *Oliver*, undone, undone!

Sir Ol. So! she's robb'd too, I hope.

Gov. O! fir, my heart-strings are broke——
I have scarce life left to tell you the misfortune.

Sir Ol. Misfortune! Why what the devil's the mat-
ter with thee; thou hast not been ravish'd, hast thou?

Gov. Ah! fir, wou'd that were the worst on't! Your
Niece! your Niece! fir.

Sir Ol. What! broke her leg!

Gov. O worse, worse! she has broke all bonds of
obedience, and is most notoriously——

Sir Ol. With child!

Gov. Married, fir.

Sir Ol. The devil!

Gov. To that abandon'd false dissembler, *Cunning-
ham*.

Sir Ol. Then wou'd she were with child——But who
was the priest? for first I'll hang him.

Gov. E'en your own kinsman, fir, Mr. *Credulous
Outwit*, that you design'd for the *Welsh* benefice.

Sir Ol. Good! I sav'd him from one halter, and he
has helpt my Niece to another——Hast thou any more
ill news?

Gov. And *Sir Gregory* is married too.

Sir Ol. To my Niece too, I hope, and then I may hang her.

Gov. No, fir, to my daughter: she's *Lady Goof* now, and that's all I have left to comfort me——And see where they come all in a cluster——

Enter Sir Gregory and Mirabel, Cunningham and Niece, Young Outwit, Lady Gentry, Sir Threadbare, Priscian, and Mr. Credulous.

Sir Ol. Heyday! rebellion in triumph! See what your care's come to now, *Mr. Politick*? Where's your wit at a pinch now, fir?

Y. Out. Here! here in this full purse, fir.

Sir Ol. Very fine! so you have been in the bottom of all this roguery against me, and I am fairly cheated.

Y. Out. To your heart's content, fir, thanks to the little wit your fatherly folly turn'd a-grazing.

Sir Ol. Umph!

Sir Greg. Wit! ha! ha! ha! why didst thou ever pretend to it, old Knight?

Sir Ol. 'Tis time I thou'd give it over indeed, when thou ask'st that question.

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! why you are crabb'd, old uncle that wou'd ha' been.

Sir Ol. And you are married to a great fortune, that thou'd ha' been.

Sir Greg. Yes, yes, if rogue, slave, rascal, kicks, thumps, and bobs of the face were to be coined, she wou'd have been a devilish fortune indeed; 'sife, fir, I wou'd not have had her with that flint-hearted tongue of hers, though she were stuck all over with diamonds, tho' her backside were all beaten gold, her eyes to drop nothing but pearls, and the rest of her rocks to make wine instead of hogheads of fair water.

Cun. That I dare swear he wou'd not, fir, if it had been only in pure friendship to me.

Sir Greg. Nay, faith, I wish thou hadst scap'd he too, and then she might have been eaten up with th

green-sickness: look you, sir, in short, I have made this gentlewoman a lady, in spite of her, and have married her in spite of you, and will love her in love to myself; and to let you all see what honour she has miss'd the being mother of, before to-morrow morning, I'll so spur up my Knighthood that I'll get her with squire.

Niece. Well, Sir Gregory, you have made me so heartily ashamed of my folly, that from henceforth, I am resolv'd to give myself up to love, gentleness, and resign'd obedience.

Sir Greg. Ay, ay, this is afore your uncle's face! but for all that, who will have a plaister upon his forehead afore morning?

Y. Out. You see, sir, all's irrecoverable—Nothing thrives but what I have a hand in—You had better allow me two hundred a year, than so much a week.

Sir Ol. O! I cannot think of parting with any thing before I die.

Y. Out. Then I shall certainly think of nothing but your death, sir.

Sir Ol. Peace, I say—I'll think again.

Sir Greg. Well, *Cunningham*, now I proclaim thee a man of thy word; for I think I have sufficiently spighted my mistress, and have as heartily four'd the old gentleman! Look how she looks! and now if I cou'd but plague my man *Simple* a little, the full joys of my spleen wou'd be compleat—

Cun. That you may do immediately; for here he comes.

Enter Simple, with an Angle-rod.]

You, madam, must join with us. [To Niece.]

Sir Greg. Ha! ha! ha! why how now, Sam! Sam! boy! what, hast thou been bobbing for grigs, and in the mean time, let your mistress slip through thy fingers like an eel? ha! ha!

Sam. Gudgeons indeed are easier taken; for I hear

this lady, d'ye observe me, has caught you, fir—But really my business is at present with this lady.

Niece. Away, ungrateful man!

Cun. Hark you, fir, 'tis now too late to expostulate: The lady, I find, is betrayed as well as you; it seems she sent above a dozen times to you, and the false brother that was employ'd between you, as often brought word you wou'd be with her in a quarter of an hour.

Sim. Sir, if I have seen any living creature, but a few Millers Thumbs, since I last saw you, I wish this angle-rod might never go through me.

Cun. What ill fate was this? Why, fir, the lady took it so to heart, that out of pure spite to her ill fortune, she is really married to another.

Sim. Why then perish my heart, fir, if I don't pity her—Yet if she has undone herself, she may thank herself for't—I cou'd do no more than I cou'd do—I kept my word; if she wou'd not believe it, 'twas her own fault; she might have had patience to have spoke with a man tho'.

Cun. That was a fault indeed, fir.

Sim. Nay, extremely faulty—Day and night she might have commanded me, and that she knew well enough, I told her so between her and I—Madam, says I, when you find yourself never so little uneasy at my being from you, do but send me the least word, I'll come and relieve you in an instant; and because a fellow has play'd the rascal with us, for her to go and throw herself away upon this, and that, and t'other, and I can't tell what—pshaw! it was idly done; cou'd not she have come to me herself, and have been satisfied?

Cun. That had done it, fir.

Sim. To a hair, fir—but when people will follow their own fancies—

Cun. Well, sure never couple so narrowly mis'd of one-another.

Sim. And as it was, fir, you saw I was within one of her, I was sure all the while I was between the Knight and home—Poor creature! it really gives me a concern to see her take on so.

Can. And yet, I can't but say, fir, her undding is her own doing.

Sim. But you'll find, fir, the thing will really reflect upon me in the end; I shall hear of it as I go along the streets: People won't consider it was not my fault——but will cry, There goes the ill-natured gentleman, upon whose account the lady flung herself away——I shall certainly be blam'd about this. Foolish woman!——Besides, fir, I am really under a great disappointment myself; for here have I turn'd myself out of my place upon her account; and now, fir, instead of this, and that, and t'other, let me perish, if I know where to eat.

Mir. Alas, poor gentleman! Come, fir, shall I speak a good word for you?

Sim. Really, madam, my temper is such, I don't know how to refuse a lady any thing.

Mir. O, Sir Gregory must be friends with you.

Sir Greg. Well, Sam! what hast thou to say now, boy?

Sim. Why, really, fir, I don't well know; but, me-thinks, here I don't know, things have been very oddly contriv'd, fir: but the short of the matter is really this: since the party we have lately disputed of seems to be otherwise disposed of, that is to say, since you have miss'd the lady, and I really have not got her, I think it wou'd not be improper if we two shou'd take one another again.

Sir Greg. Well, well, Sam! with all my heart; a matth, boy.

Sim. Madam, I thank you——And really the thing is much easier than it was.——Pray, fir, where do you dine?

Y. Out. Nay, fir, take it your own way——For my part, I shall but lose by this allowance——I have not fought out half my weapons yet, fir——Besides, fir, I have a way of fighting invisible; many a polt have you had within these twelve hours, fir, without knowing who it came from.

Sir Ol. How? make that appear, and I'll say something to thee.

Y. Out. *Imprimis*, to let you see how profoundly your apprehension was asleep, sir, I fairly struck five pieces out of you for these gentlemen beggars, of which bounty your humble servant was the first publick example, and private sharer. You may remember, sir, when you admir'd our speaking Greek and Syriac, we were then only saying, in vile gibberish, that we wou'd not stir till we had pick'd your pocket.

Sir Ol. But was that wit your own, sir?

Y. Out. Pshaw! a slight preface to the volumes that are to follow.

Sir Ol. How!

Y. Out. What think you of a certain hundred pieces given to redeem your favourite Nephew from the hands of a constable, for being concern'd in a certain robbery? Which was indeed no robbery, no constable, no thief, nothing real, but top, sides, and bottom, a fair bite all over, sir. And, lastly, sir, this memorable hundred pounds worth of musick, which to crown my triumph, sir, are very generously return'd to play just one dance at my cousin *Cunningham's* wedding.

Sir Ol. Well, boy, since thou hast satisfied me I have no fool to my son, I'll now let the world see thou hast a wise man to thy father——Give me the writings——There's my hand to it——And now strike up musick——

Wit shou'd be try'd before it claims regard.

Y. Out. But fairly prov'd, like mine, shou'd find reward.

E P I L O G U E.

Pinkethman taking Bullock by the Sleeve, speaks.

Pin. *H*old! hold! Sir Bullock! You must stay, dear
Rogue,
And tack a Rhime or two to th' Epilogue.

Bul. *P*ho! Pox! not I; beside, your Jests are more in
Vogue.
If I don't think you're best alone, then rack me.

Pin. *A*y, but you know—I'm better—with an Afs to
back me.

Bul. *O*! Sir, for that, you'll find, indeed, dear Brother,
That's but one Afs's backing of another:
Now tho' the Jest is stale, of Afs bestridden,
It may be new to see the Rider ridden:
[Trips up his Heels, and bestrides him.]

Pin. *O*d/heart! the Dog will murder me——

Bul. ————— No, no;
I'm only backing of my Friend, or so:
Now, pray, Sirs, tell me, did you ever see a Face,
[Shewing it to the Audience.]
In every Circumstance more like an Afs?
And isn't not just, that I shou'd now keep down
The Afs that has so often rid the Town?
But that thou may'st hereafter grow so wise——
Hey-dey! What now? ————— [Pin. struggling.]

E P I L O G U E.

Pin. ————— I'll tell you when I rise?
 [Throws Bul. over his head, and mounts on him.]

Bul. Ods-me! the beast has thrown me——

Pin. ————— Down, rogue, down:
 Thus rightful Monarchs re-ascend their throne.
 So have I seen, and with as little rout,
 Britons and French march into towns and out;
 And thus, by sudden turns of good and ill luck,
 Victorious Pinky strides the conquer'd Bullock.
 But now, to let you see the conqueror's virtue,
 Tho', slave, I have you down—I scorn to hurt you:

Bul. Well, well, I yield: yet all this mighty do,
 But proves, that I'm an Ass as well as you.

Pin. Thus the sole glory we in victors see,
 Is first to make men slaves, then set 'em free.
 Get out, you puppy——

Bul. ————— Well, now let's agree. [Rises,
 And as you first propos'd, befriend the play.

Pin. That's true—grant, Gallants, but your smiles to-day,
 And your positioners shall ever pray:

Bul. That every lover to these scenes inclin'd,
 May the same favour from his mistress find.

Pin. May all the married dames preserve their spouses,
 From drink, late hours, and ill-reputed houses.

Bul. May no ripe virgin here, past twenty, tarry,
 But the first swain, that woos her, love, and marry.

Pin. Widows that flameless lie, like uncurr'd fire,
 Be blown by younger brothers to desire.

Bul. May you, that keep no cows, that is, won't marry,
 Skim the sweet cream-bowls of your neighbour's dairy.

E P I L O G U E.

Pin. *May all you, soldiers, that have lain in trenches,
Good winter-quarters find, and soft—sound wenches.*

Bul. *The beaux still make subscriptions for the fair,
And each presented ticket cure despair.*

Pin. *Each fair nymph's love, that's now abroad in wars,
Come laden home with his—and her arrears.*

Bul. *May all the gamesters make their bubbles pay,
And daily 'noint 'em for their itch of play.*

Pin. *Each miss that pays her only half-crown duly,
Be ten-fold reimburs'd it by a cully:*

Bul. *And may those cullies, whom their charms so urge on'
Ne'er find occasion after for a surgeon.*

Pin. *So may these wishes wait on all that say,
In hearty claps they will support the Play,
And cram the House upon the Author's day.*

}



T H E.
LADY'S LAST STAKE:
OR, THE
WIFE'S RESENTMENT.
A
C O M E D Y.



To the Most Noble the

MARQUIS of KENT,

Lord Chamberlain of Her MAJESTY'S
Household, &c.

THE utmost success I ever propos'd from this Play was, that it might reach the taste of a few good Judges, and from thence plead a sort of Title to your Lordship's Protection: And, if the most just and candid Critics are not the greatest Flatterers, I have not fail'd in my Proposal. As for those Gentlemen that thrust themselves forward upon the Stage before a crowded Audience, as if they resolv'd to play themselves, and save the Actor the Trouble of presenting them; they, indeed, as they are above Instruction, so they scorn to be diverted by it, and will as soon allow me a good Voice as a Genius. I did not intend it should entertain any that never come with a Design to sit out a Play; and therefore, without being much mortified, am content such Persons should dislike it. If I would have been less instructive, I might easily have had a louder, tho' not a more valuable Applause. But I shall always prefer a fixt and general Attention before the noisy Roars of the Gallery. A Play, without a just Moral, is a poor and trivial Undertaking; and 'tis from the Success of such Pieces, that Mr. Collier was furnish'd with an advantageous Pretence of laying his unmerciful Axe to the Root of the Stage. Gaming is a Vice that has undone more innocent

DEDICATION.

Principles than any one Folly that's in Fashion ; therefore I chose to expose it to the Fair Sex in its most hideous Form, by reducing a Woman of Honour to stand the presumptuous Addresses of a Man, whom neither her Virtue nor Inclination would let her have the least Taste to. Now 'tis not impossible but some Man of Fortune, who has a handsome Lady, and a great deal of Money to throw away, may, from this startling hint, think it worth his while to find his Wife some less hazardous Diversion. If that should ever happen, my end of writing this Play is answer'd ; and if it may boast of any Favours from the Town, I now must own they are entirely owing to your Lordship's Protection of the Theatre : For, without an Union of the best Actors, it must have been impossible for it to have receiv'd a tolerable Justice in the Performance.

The Stage has for many Years, till late, groan'd under the greatest Discouragements, which have been very much, if not wholly, owing to the Mismanagement or Avarice of those that have awkwardly govern'd it. Great Sums have been ventur'd upon empty Projects, and Hopes of immoderate Gains ; and when those Hopes have fail'd, the Loss has been tyrannically deducted out of the Actors Salary. And if your Lordship had not redeem'd 'em, they were very near being wholly laid aside, or, at least, the Use of their Labour was to be swallow'd up in the pretended Merit of Singing and Dancing. I don't offer this as a Reflection upon Musie (for I allow and feel its Charms) ; but it has been the Misfortune of that, as well as Poetry, to have been too long in the Hands of those, whose Taste and Fancy are utterly insensible of their Use and Power. And tho' your Lordship foresaw, and Experience tells us, that both Diversions wou'd be better encourag'd under their seperate Endeavours,

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yet this was a Scheme, that cou'd never be beat into the impenetrable Heads of those that might have honestly paid the Labourers their Hire, and put the Profits of both into their own Pockets. Nay, even the Opera, tho' the Town has neither grudg'd it Pay nor Equipage, from either the Wilfulness or Ignorance of the same General, we see, was not able to take the Field till *December*!

My Lord, there is nothing difficult to a Body of *Engl^{sh}* People, when they are unanimous, and well commanded. And tho' your Lordship's Tenderness of oppressing is so very just, that you have rather stay'd to convince a Man of your good Intentions to him, than to do him even a Service against his Will: Yet, since your Lordship has so happily begun the Establishment of the separate Diversions, we live in Hope, that the same Justice and Resolution will still persuade you to go as successfully through with it.

But while any Man is suffer'd to confound the Industry and use of 'em, by acting publicly, in Opposition to your Lordship's equal intentions, under a false and intricate Pretence of not being able to comply with 'em; the Town is likely to be more entertain'd with the private Dissentions, than the public Performance of either, and the Actors in a perpetual Fear and Necessity of petitioning your Lordship every Season for new Relief.

To succour the Distress'd is the first Mark of Greatness; and your Lordship is eminently distinguish'd for a Virtue that certainly claims the next Place to it. The disinterested Choice and Manner of your Lordship's disposing Places in your Gift, are Proofs that you always have the Claims of Merit under your first and tenderest Considera-

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tion. And from the Assurance of this Thought, my Lord, the Stage, the Poets, and the Players, lay their Cause, their Hopes, and utmost Expectations at your Lordship's Feet for Support and Protection.

I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most Humble,

And most Obedient Servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

PROLOGUE.

*SINCE Plays are but the Mirrors of our Lives,
 And soon or late Mankind are chain'd to Wives;
 Since these dissoluble Fetters too, must be
 Our greatest Happiness or Misery;
 What Subject ought, in Reason, more to please ye,
 Than an Attempt to make those Chains sit easy?
 Tho' in the Noose so many Souls seem curst,
 Pray who's in Fault?—For when you've said your worst,
 You all did feel it Happiness——at first.* }
*Therefore, our Author draw you once the Life
 Of Careless Husband, and Enduring Wife,
 Who by her Patience (tho' much out of Fashion)
 Retriev'd, at last, her Wanderer's Inclination.
 Yet some there are, who still arraign the Play,
 At her tame Temper shock'd, as who shou'd say——
 The Price for a dull Husband was too much to pay.
 Had he been strangled sleeping, who shou'd hurt ye?
 When so provok'd——Revenge had been a Virtue.
 ——Well then——to do his former Moral Right,
 Or set such Measures in a fairer Light,
 He gives you now a Wife, he's sure in Fashion,
 Whose Wrongs use modern Means for Reparation.
 No Fool, that will her Life in Sufferings waste,
 But furious, proud, and insolently chaste;
 Who more in Honour jealous, than in Love,
 Resolves Resentment shall her Wrongs remove:
 Not to be cheated with his civil Face,
 But scorns his Falshood, and to prove him base,
 Mob'd up in Hack triumphant dogs him to the Place.* }
*These modish Measures, we presume, you'll own,
 Are oft what Wives of Gallantry have done;
 But if their Consequence shou'd meet the Curse
 Of making a provok'd Aversion worse,
 Then you his former Moral must allow,
 Or own the Satire just he shews you now.
 Some other Follies too, our Scenes present;
 Some warn the Fair from Gaming, when extravagant.*

P R O L O G U E.

*But when undone, you see the dreadful State,
That hard press'd Virtue is reduc'd to make;
Think not the Terrors you behold her in,
Are rudely drawn i' expose what has been seen;
But, as the friendly Muse's tenderest way,
To let her Dangers warn you from the Depth of Play.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Lord *Wranglose*,

Mr. *Wilks*.

Lord *George Brilliant*,

Mr. *Cibber*.

Sir *Friendly Moral*,

Mr. *Keene*.

W O M E N.

Lady *Wranglove*,

Mrs. *Barry*.

Lady *Gentle*,

Mrs. *Rogers*.

Mrs. *Conquest*,

Mrs. *Oldfield*,

Miss *Notable*,

Mrs. *Cross*.

THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE:
OR, THE
WIFE'S RESENTMENT.

A C T I.

SCENE, *Lord Wronglove's Apartment.*

Lord Wronglove alone, musing.

Lord Wronglove.

MY wife ——— as abundance of other men of
quality's wives are —, is a miserable woman:
ask her the reason, she'll tell you ——— husband:
ask me, I say, wife ——— all's entirely owing to her
own temper.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. Hartf. My lady desires to know if your lord-
ship pleases to spare her the chariot this morning?

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Ld. Wrong. Hah! That's as much as to say, I have a mind to guess when; and how you go out this morning. [*Aside.*] Well, the chat'ot is at her service. [*Exit Hart.*] This continual jealousy is insupportable. ——— What's to be done with her? What's her complaint? Who's the aggressor? I'll e'en refer the matter fairly to my own conscience, and if she cast me there, I'll do her justice; if not, though the cost were ten times hers, I'll make myself easy for the rest of my life ——— Let me see ——— as to the fact I'm charg'd with, *viz.* That I have feloniously embezzled my inclinations among the rough and smooth conversation of several undaunted gentlewomen, and so forth. ——— That I think, since it must be prov'd against me, I had best plead guilty to. ——— Be it so. ——— Very well! ——— A terrible charge indeed: and now ———

Enter Brush.

Brush. My lady desires to know if your lordship pleases to dine at home to-day?

Ld. Wrong. Right! Another gentle enquiry. [*Aside.*] Why, tell her 'tis impossible to guess, but her ladyship may do as she pleases. [*Exit Brush*] But to go on. ——— Now let's hear the defendant, and then proceed to judgment and damages. Well! the defendant says, That 'tis true he was in love with madam up to her proud heart's wishes, but hop'd that marriage was his end of servitude; that then her wife reserve, her pride, and other fine lady's airs would be all laid aside. ——— No, ——— her ladyship was still the same unconquer'd heroine: if being endur'd cou'd give me happiness, 'twas mine; if not, she knew herself, and shou'd not bend below her sex's value. ——— I bore this long, then urg'd her duty; that this reserve of humour was inconsistent with her being a friend, a wife, or a companion ——— She said, 'twas Nature's fault, and I but talk'd in vain. ——— Upon this, I found my patience began to have enough on't: so I

e'en made her invincibleship a low bow, and told her, I wou'd dispose of my time in pleasures, which were a little more come-atable; which pleasures I have found, and she —— has found out; but truly she won't bear it: and tho' she scorn'd to love, she'll condescend to hate; she'll have redress, revenge, and reparation; so that if I have a mind to be easy at home, I need but tremble at her anger, down on my knees, confess, beg pardon, promise amendment, keep my word, and the bus'ness is done: —— Now, venerable, human conscience, speak; must I do this only to purchase what the greatness of her soul has taught me to be indifferent to? —— Am I bound to fast, because her ladyship has no appetite? Shall threats and brow-beatings fright me into justice, where my own will's a law? —— No, no, no; positively no: —— I'm lord of my own heart sure; and whoever thinks to enter at my humour, shall speak me very fair. —— Most generous conscience, I give you thanks for this deliverance! And since I'm positive, I've little nature on my side too, madam may now go on with her noble resentment if she pleases.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George Brilliant gives his service, and if your lordship's at leisure, he'll wait upon you.

Ld. Wrong. Give my service, say I shall be glad to see him. *[Exit Brush.]*

D'ye hear? *Brush!* *[Brush returns.]*

Brush. My lord!

Ld. Wrong. Is the footman come back yet?

Brush. Yes, my lord, he call'd at *White's*, but there's no letter for your lordship.

Ld. Wrong. Very well. *[Exit Brush.]*

I can't imagine the meaning of it; —— safe, I hav'n't play'd with the baby-fac'd girl 'till I'm in love with her; and yet her disappointing me yesterday does not slip so easily through my memory as things of this gentle nature us'd to do. —— A very phlegmatick symptom.

1 2

— And yet, if she had come, 'tis ten to one, the greatest relief she could have given me, would have been a fair excuse to get rid of her. — Hum ! ay, ay, all's safe. — She has only stirr'd my pride, I find ; my heart's as sound as my constitution ; — and yet her not coming, nor excusing it, puzzles me.

Enter Brush.

Brush. A letter for your lordship.

Ld. Wrong. Who brought it ?

Brush. Saug, the chairman.

Ld. Wrong. O ! 'tis right ; now we shall be let into the secret.

[*Reads.*]

I wo'n't beg your pardon for not coming yesterday, because it was not my fault ; but indeed I'm sorry I could not.

Kind, however, tho' 'tis possible she may lye too.

To be short, old Teizer smoaks the business, poss —

By her stile, the child seems to have a great genius for iniquity ; but who the duce is old Teizer ? O ! that must be her uncle, Sir *Friendly Moral* ! — *Smoaks the business, poss ! — Very well.*

For he watch'd me all day, as if he had been in love with me himself : but you may depend upon me this afternoon, about five, at the same place ; till when, dear Dismal, adieu.

[*Tears the letter.*

Well said ! Egad, this girl will debauch me ! what pity 'tis her person does not spread like her understanding ! — But she is one of *Eve's* own sisters, born a woman. Bid the fellow stay for an answer. [*Exit Brush.*

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Hartf. My lady desires to know, if your lordship pleases to drink any tea ?

Ld. Wrong. [*Aside.*] What a mess of impertinence have I had this morning ! but I'll make my advantage-

of this. Pray thank your lady, and tell her, I desire
 She'll be pleas'd to come and drink some with me.
 [*Exit Hartf.*] When a man has a little private folly
 upon his hands, 'tis prudent to keep his wife in good
 humour, at least, 'till the frailty's thoroughly com-
 mitted. [*Exit.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove and Brush.

La. Wrong. Where's my lord?

Brush. I believe he's writing in his closet, madam;
 if your ladyship pleases, I'll go and see.

La. Wrong. No, stay——I'll——I'll——Wait
 without.

Brush. Jealous, by *Jupiter*! I must look sharp, I see.
 [*Retires.*]

La. Wrong. Writing! then I am confirm'd! Not a
 day passes without some fresh discovery of his perfidious-
 ness——This usage is beyond patience——Sure men
 think that wives are stocks or stones, without all sense of
 injuries, or only born and bound to bear them! But
 since his villainies want the excuse of my deserving
 them, I'll let him see I dare resent 'em as I ought. I'll
 prove 'em first, and then revenge 'em with my scorn——
 Hum! what's here? a torn letter! ha! this hand is
 new! O! my patience! some fresh, some undiscover'd
 slut! Here, *Hartshorn*!

Enter Hartshorn.

Go to the door this minute, and tell the impudent fel-
 low there, that my lord says the letter requires no an-
 swer; and if he offers to bring any more, he'll have his
 limbs broke.

Brush. [*Behind.*] Ha! this was a lucky discovery!!
 Between my lord, or my lady, it's hard if I don't mend
 my place by it.

La. Wrong. It is not yet so torn, but I may read it
 ——'T will cost his wit some trouble to evade this
 proof, I'm sure——I'll have it piec'd, and send it

him —— I'll let him see I know him still —— A base,
a mean —— Huh! —— now he's nauseous to me.

[*Exit Lady Wrong.*]

Re-enter Lord Wronglove with a letter.

Ld. Wrong. Here, give this to the porter.

Brush. My lord, the porter's gone. [*Smiling.*]

Ld. Wrong. Gone! how so! What does the fellow
sneer at?

Brush. My lord, I beg your lordship's pardon for my
boldness, but, perhaps, it may be more useful to you
than my silence; I saw something that happen'd just
now ——

Ld. Wrong. What's the matter?

Brush. While your lordship was writing within, my
lady, I fancy'd by her looks, suspected something by
Snug's being at the door (for she enquires every mortal's
business that comes to speak with your lordship);
but here she came, and bid me go out of the room.
Upon which I made bold to watch her at the door,
where I saw her pick up the pieces of that letter your
lordship tore just now; and then she flew into a violent
passion, and order'd the porter to be sent away without
his answer.

Ld. Wrong. No matter; you know where to find
him?

Brush. Yes, my lord, he plies at *White's*.

Ld. Wrong. Run after him quick, tell him it was a
mistake, and that's his answer. [*Gives a letter.*] [*Exit
Brush.*] Let me see —— I shall certainly hear of this
letter from my wife; and 'tis probable her pride will
have as much pleasure in reproaching me, as her good-
nature would in finding me innocent —— I must take
care not to let her grow upon me —— To bear the open
insolence of a wife is a punishment, that exceeds both
the crime and the pleasure of any favours the sex can
give us —— But why am I so apprehensive of a
poor woman's being out of humour? My gravity for
the matter would be as ridiculous as her passion. ——

The worst on't is, that in our matrimonial squabbles, one side's generally forced to make a confidence with their servants; I am reduc'd now to trust this fellow — But I can make it his interest to be secret. —

Enter Hartshorn with tea.

Hartf. Here's your lordship's tea.

Ld. Wrong. O! thank you, Mrs. *Hartshorn* —
Where's your lady?

Hartf. My lord, she's not very well, and desir'd me to give your lordship this. [*Gives a letter.*]

Ld. Wrong. So! now it comes — let's see —
Ha! the child's letter, faith, carefully piec'd together again; how — here's some of her own hand too.
[*Reads.*]

Something has happen'd that makes me unfit for tea; I won't tell you what, but that I find 'tis the fashion for married people to have separate secrets.

Humph! This is speaking pretty plain. — Now if I take no notice of it, I shall have her walk by me in the house with a dumb, gloomy insolence for a fortnight together. — Suppose I let her — No — better talk with her — The most violent jealousy is often subject to the grossest credulity — I'll make one push for't, however; 'tis certainly more prudent to come off if I can. — Mrs. *Hartshorn*, pray tell your lady I must needs see her; I have something to say to her that will make her laugh, though she was dying of the vapours.

Hartf. My lord, I'll tell her. [*Exit Hartf.*]

Ld. Wrong. Or suppose her jealousy is too wise for my wit; say she won't be impos'd upon: at worst, I'll carry it on with such an excess of assurance, that I'll give her the mortification of thinking, that I believe I have deceived her: she shan't have the pleasure of knowing she insults me; I'll crush the very hope of her resentment; and by seeming always easy myself, make her jealousy a private plague to her insolence. She shall never catch me owning any thing. Her pride

would have its end indeed, if she cou'd once bring me to the humble shame of confession. ——— Oh, she's here!

Enter Lady Wronglove very grave.

La. Wrong. D'ye want me for any thing?

Ld. Wrong. Ay, child, sit down: *Marybourn* told me you were not well, so I had a mind to divert you a little. Such a ridiculous adventure sure ——— Ha! ha! ha!

La. Wrong. I am as well as I expect to be, tho' perhaps not so easy to be diverted.

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! ha! no matter for that, if I don't divert you——Here take your dish, child—— Ha! ha! ha!

La. Wrong. I shan't drink any.

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! ha! Do you know now, that I know what makes you so out of humour? Ha! ha!

La. Wrong. By my soul, you have a good assurance:

{Turning away.}

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! ha! Do you know too, that I am now insulting you with the most ridiculous malice, and yet with all the comical justice in the world? Ha! ha! ha!

La. Wrong. My lord, all this is mightily thrown away upon me, I never had any great genius to humour; besides, that little I have, you know I have now reason to be out of: and, to spare you the vain trouble of endeavouring to impose upon me, I must tell you, that this usage is fit only for the common wretches you converse with.

Ld. Wrong. By my soul, I don't believe the like ever happened in all the accidents of human life! Such an incredible, such a romantick complication of blunders, that, let me perish, if I think *Moliere's Cocu Imaginaire* has half so many turns in it, as you shall hear, child———In the first place, the porter makes a blunder by mistaking the place for the person, and enquires for me, instead of one at my house; my block-

head, *Brush* here, carries it on, and with his own blundering hand gives his mistress's letter to me: no sooner was that mistake set to rights, but the pieces of the letter fall into your hands, and (as if Fortune resolv'd the jest should not be lost) you really fancy'd it came from a mistress of mine; and so, by way of comical resentment, fall out of humour with your tea, and send it to me again. Ha! ha! ha!

La. Wrong. This evasion, my lord, is the worst stuff that ever any sure was made of.

Ld. Wrong. [*Afide.*] 'Twon't do, I find; but 'tis no matter, I'll go on. Ha! ha! and so upon this, what does me I, but instead of making you easy, let's you go on with the fancy, till I was thoroughly convinced your suspicion was real, and then comes me about with the most unexpected catastrophe, and tells you the whole truth of the matter. Ha! ha! ha!

La. Wrong. A very pretty farce indeed, my lord; but by the thinness of the plot, I see you have not given yourself much contrivance.

Ld. Wrong. No, upon my soul 'twas all so directly in nature, that the least fiction in the world had knock'd it all to pieces.

La. Wrong. It's very well, my lord! I am as much diverted with the entertainment, I suppose, as you expect I should be.

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! Why did I not tell you I should divert you?

La. Wrong. You have indeed, my lord, to astonishment. Tho' there's one part of the design you left out in the relation, and that was the answer that you wrote (by mistake, I suppose) to your man's mistress.

Ld. Wrong. O that!—why that was—that was—the—the—the—the answer? Ay, ay, the answer was sent after the porter, because you know, if he had gone away without it, 'twas fifty to one the poor fellow's mistress wou'd not have been reconcil'd to him this fortnight——But did you observe, child, what a coarse familiar style the puss writes?

La. Wrong. Coarseness of style is no proof that the

puffs might not be mistress to a man of quality: and I must tell you, my lord; when men of quality can find their account in engaging with women, whose highest modesty is impudence, methinks they shou'd not wonder if men of their own principles, whose impudence is often mistaken for wit, should talk their wives into the same failing.

Ld. *Wrong*. Let me die, child, if you han't a great deal of good sense. [*Sipping his tea.*]

La. *Wrong*. 'Tis not the first time that an affronted wife has convin'd the world of her personal merit, to the severe repentance of her husband.

Ld. *Wrong*. Abundance of good sense.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George, my lord.

Ld. *Wrong*. Desire him to walk in ——— Nay, you need not go, child.

La. *Wrong*. I am not in a humour now for company ——— There's a couple of you.

[*Exit Lady Wronglove.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. What pains this silly woman takes to weary me; always widening the breach between us, as if 'twere her interest to have no hopes of an accommodation; as if she felt no pain in making her own life wretched, so she could but imbitter mine ——— Let her go on ——— Here's one that always sweetens it.

Enter Lord George.

Ah, my Georgy! Kifs.

Ld. Geo. And kifs, and kifs again, my dear ——— By *Ganymede* there's nectar on thy lips. O the pleasure of a friend to tell the joy! — O *Wronglove*! Such hopes!

Ld. *Wrong*. Hey-day! What's the matter?

Ld. Geo. Such soft ideas! ——— Such thrilling thoughts of aching pleasure! ——— In short, I have too much on't.

Ld. *Wrong*. Thou strange piece of wild nature!

Ld. *Geo*. Death! I tell thee, man, I'm above half seas over.

Ld. *Wrong*. One wou'd rather think half the seas were over you; for, in my mind, you don't talk like a man above water.

Ld. *Geo*. Prithee forgive me: how is it possible I shou'd, when all my faculties are drown'd in joy?

Ld. *Wrong*. Then prithee, my dear, float about; shut down the sluice of your rapture, before the nothingness of your words gets over the banks of your understanding. In plain common sense, let's know the business.

Ld. *Geo*. Why the business, in one word ——— it's impossible to tell you.

Ld. *Wrong*. Impossible! ——— Will you drink any tea?

Ld. *Geo*. Tea! thou soft, thou sober, sage, and venerable liquid, thou innocent pretence for bringing the wicked of both sexes together in a morning; thou female tongue-running, smile-smoothing, heart opening, wink-tipling cordial, to whose glorious insipidity I owe the happiest moment of my life, let me fall prostrate thus, and f—p, f—p, f—p, thus adore thee!

[*Kneels and sips the tea.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. Come, come, you silly affected rogue, get up, and talk at least like a fool to be understood.

Ld. *Geo*. Don't you think there's pleasure in affectation, when one's heartily in good-humour.

[*Very affectedly.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. Impertinent puppy — Drink your tea.

Ld. *Geo*. O *Wranglove*! I have been drinking tea. —

[*Transported.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. With some laughing ladies, I presume, whose incessant concussion of words wou'd not let you put in a syllable, and so you are come to ease yourself upon me.

Ld. *Geo*. Then prithee be a friend, and let me speak,

Ld. *Wrong*. Not only blank verse, but rhyme, if you please; is the name of nonsense, ago on.

Ld. *Geo*. Swear then.

Ld. *Wrong*. Swear!

Ld. *Geo*. Ay, swear.

Ld. *Wrong*. ——— Blood!

Ld. *Geo*. Pshaw! 'Prithee.

Ld. *Wrong*. Nay, pray, sir, give me leave to play the fool in my turn; the moment you speak to be understood, I'll secure you a reasonable answer.

Ld. *Geo*. Swear then never (to any mortal) to trust from you, or hint, or speak of what I shall discover.

Ld. *Wrong*. Upon my honour.

Ld. *Geo*. Honour! the common hackney-oath of fops, rakes, and sharpers; swear me by something dearer than thy eyes, than life or liberty.

Ld. *Wrong*. Indeed!

Ld. *Geo*. Swear me by all thy tenderest hopes in love; by thy soft sighs of pain, proceeding from thy pleasure; swear——

Ld. *Wrong*. I do by something dearer to me yet—— By my short stay after possession! by my chaise after hard riding; by my easy-chair after dinner, and by t'other bottle after the bill's paid, I will be secret.

Ld. *Geo*. Ay, now be perjur'd if thou darest—— Know then—— at last, that generous, lovely creature has said behind my back, that I am the most sober, good-humour'd, and agreeably-inoffensive young fellow, that ever came into a civil family; to be short, she has made me a general invitation to her house; upon which I have taken lodgings that look full into her back closet window, and drank tea with her alone this morning.

Ld. *Wrong*. Some humble sinner, whose only charm is being another man's mistress, I'll lay my life on't. [*Aside.*] Well, and what did you give her?

Ld. *Geo*. A bleeding heart, all studded o'er with wounds of her eyes own making,

Ld. *Wrong*. That is, you pull'd out your watch as

you were going away, and she took a fancy to one of the seals: though by the device, I presume it was only a modern bauble, so 'tis probable you might not have come off much cheaper at Mother *Davis's*.

Ld. *Geo.* Profanation! ——— To be serious then, at once, I have solid hopes of Lady *Gentle*.

Ld. *Wrong.* Hoh! hoh! O thou vain, thou senseless fop! Is all this mighty rapture then only from a fine woman's being commonly civil to thee? The mere innocent effect of her good-humour and breeding.

Ld. *Geo.* Pshaw! tell not me of whence it is born, let it suffice, I've form'd it into hope; let your tame, civil, secret sighs, such as never think the fair one sure, till they hear the tag of her lace click, think it no cause for joy; but I've a soul that wakes, that starts up at the least dawning cranny of a hope, and sets my every faculty on fire — she must — she must — she must be won — For since I have resolv'd to hope, my fancy doubly paints her beauties — O! she's all one fragrant field of charms, to pamper up the blood of wild desire.

Ld. *Wrong.* Ah *George*! what luscious morsels then must her husband take of her?

Ld. *Geo.* Why didst thou mention him? — Death! I can't bear that thought — Can she love him? — O the verdant vales, the downy lawns of fruitful bliss! The overflowing springs of cool, refreshing beauty, that happy dog must revel, range, and sport in!

Ld. *Wrong.* Nay, the woman's a fine creature, that's certain; it's thousand pities one can't laugh her out of that unfashionable folly of liking her husband, when here's a man of undisputed honour too, that knows the world, that understands love and ruin to a tittle; that would, at the least tip of a wink, rid her of all her incumbrances, set her at the very top of the mode, and qualify her for a separate maintenance in the twinkling of a hackney-coach wheel.

Ld. *Geo.* Can you be a moment serious?

Ld. Wrong. Faith, fir, if I am not, 'tis only to make you so.

Ld. Geo. You seem to think this business impracticable.

Ld. Wrong. Why truly, for any great progress I see you have made, I don't think but it is: and if you'll take my opinion of the woman, I do think, provided you'll allow there's any such thing in nature, she's one of impregnable virtue: that you can no more make a breach in her honour, than find a flaw in her features: bate but a little of her over-fondness for play, she's the perfection of a good wife.

Ld. Geo. O your servant, fir; you own she has a passion for play then.

Ld. Wrong. That I can't deny; and, what's worse, I doubt she likes it a great deal better than she understands it. I hear she has lost considerably to the Count of late.

Ld. Geo. You must know, then, that the Count is my engineer; he and I have a right understanding; whenever she plays we are sure of her money: now he has already stript her of all her running cash, besides eight hundred pounds upon honour. For payment of which, I made him send her a downright pressing letter by me this morning: I observ'd her a little startled when she read it, and took that opportunity to skrew myself into the secret, and offer'd my assistance; to be short, I address'd myself with so much tender regard to her confusion, that, before we parted, I engag'd this afternoon to lend her a thousand pounds of her own money to pay him.

Ld. Wrong. I confess your battery's rais'd against the only weak side of her virtue. But how are you sure you can work her to push her ill fortune? She may give over play: what will all your advantages signify, if she does not lose to you more than she can pay?

Ld. Geo. O, I have an expedient for that too—— Look you, in short, I won't spoil my plot by discovering it; a few hours will make it ripe for execution, and then —— but

*There is no fear that I shou'd tell
The joys that are unspeakable.*

Ld. *Wrong*. Ha! ha! and so you are really in love to the last extremity of passion.

Ld. *Geo*. Prithee don't laugh at me. [*Affectedly*.

Ld. *Wrong*. Don't you think I have heard you with a great deal of patience?

Ld. *Geo*. Nay, I know we puppies in love are tiresome.

Ld. *Wrong*. And so you think that all this extravagance of your style and gesture must have convinc'd me, that you really care sixpence for this woman?

Ld. *Geo*. Wou'd you have me swear?

Ld. *Wrong*. Ay, come, do a little.

Ld. *Geo*. Why then, by all the sacred ties of honour, friendship, and restless love, had I but five thousand pounds in the whole world, and nothing else could purchase her ———

Ld. *Wrong*. I dare swear you'd give it every shilling, that you really cou'd love her, tho' it were only to get rid of your passion for Mrs. *Conquest*.

Ld. *Geo*. Why then, look you——

Ld. *Wrong*. You may swear 'till you are black in the face; but you love her, her only, indeed you do: your passion for Lady *Gentle* is affected: not but I grant you'll pursue it, for when nothing's in view you're indefatigable: You are a little uneasy at the smallness of Mrs. *Conquest's* fortune, and wou'd fain persuade yourself you are in love in another place——but hark'e, you'll marry her.——And so, if your chariot's at the door, you shall carry me to *White's*.

Ld. *Geo*. Why then (except myself), thou art positively the most impudent fellow upon the face of the earth.

[*Exeunt*.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE *continues.**Lady Wranglove alone.*

La. Wrang. **W**H-Y am I thus uneasy? Sure I am unreasonable in my temper, I overrate myself. — For if the husband's violation of his marriage-vow is in itself so foul an injury, whence is it that the law is so sparing in its provision of redress? And yet 'tis sure an injury, because just nature makes the pain of bearing it outrageous. — O hard condition! For if else the pain provokes the wife to move for reparation, the world's gross customs makes her, perhaps, a jest to those who should assist her. — If he offends, the crime's unpardonable; yet if injur'd, has no right to compensation: it may be usual this, but sure 'tis unnatural.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. Hartf. Madam, the Porter's come back.

La. Wrang. Bring him in.

Enter Porter.

Well, friend, how far have you follow'd 'em?

Port. Why, and it please your honour, first they both won in Lord George's chariot to *White's*.

La. Wrang. How long did they stay?

Port. Why, and it please your honour, they stay'd, as near as I can guess, about — a very little time.

La. Wrang. Whither did they go then?

Port. Why then they stop'd a little at the coach-maker's at *Charing Cross*, and look'd upon a small thing there; they call a booby-hutch, and did not stay; and

so then stopt again at the fruit-shop in *Covent-Garden*, and then just went up to *Tom's* coffee-house, and then went away to the toy-shop at the *Temple-Gate*, and there they stay'd. I can't tell you how long, an't please you.

La. Wrong. Did they buy any thing?

Port. Yes, a number of things, truly.

La. Wrong. Were they mostly for men's use, or how?

Port. Nay, I don't know; such sort of *trangams* as the gentry use:—I remember one was such a kind of a small scissar-case as that by your honour's side, my Lord *Wronglove* bought it.

La. Wrong. So! that was not for me, I am sure. [*Afide.*] Do you know what he paid for't?

Port. Troth, I can't say I do——They came away, an't like your honour, but I did not see them pay for any thing——And so after that——

Enter Hartshorn.

Hartf. Young *Miss Notable* is come to wait upon your ladyship.

La. Wrong. Here, come into the next room, friend, I must employ you farther.——Desire her to walk in; I'll wait upon her presently.

[*Exit La. Wrong. and Porter.*]

Re-enter Mrs. Hartshorn with Miss Notable.

Mrs. Hartf. If your ladyship pleases to walk in, my lady knows you are here, madam.——Dear madam! how extremely your ladyship's grown within this half year?

Miss Notable. O fy, *Mrs. Hartshorn*, you don't think me taller, do you?

Mrs. Hartf. O dear madam, to an infinity! Nay, and so plump too, so fresh-look'd, so round-hipp'd, and full-chested——that——I am sure, madam, he! he! if I were a young gentleman of quality,

madam, he! he! Your ladyship will pardon my freedom——I protest, he! he!——

[Curt'sying and simpering.]
Miss *Not.* I vow, Mrs. *Hartshorn*, you have a great deal of good-humour; is not your lady very fond of you?

Mrs. *Hartf.* Truly, madam, I have no reason to complain of my lady; but you must know, madam, of late, there have been some concerns in the family between my lord and she, that I vow, my poor lady is seldom in humour with any body.

Miss *Not.* I'm mighty sorry for that——What, does my lord give her any occasion for jealousy, think not you?

Mrs. *Hartf.* Occasion, quoth'a! O lord! madam——But 'tis not fit for me to speak.

Miss *Not.* *[Aside.]* I'm glad to hear this——'Tis possible her ladyship may be convinc'd that fifteen is as fit an age for love as six-and-twenty.——And if her jealousy's kindled already, I'll blow it into a blaze before I part with her.

Mrs. *Hartf.* Madam, I hear my lady's coming——I humbly take my leave of your ladyship. Your ladyship's most obedient servant.

[Impertinently cringing.]
Miss *Not.* Your servant, good Mrs. *Hartshorn*; if you'll call to see me, I have a very pretty new cross, that would become your neck extremely——You'll pardon me.

Mrs. *Hartf.* Dear madam! your ladyship's so obliging——I shall take an opportunity to thank your ladyship——
[Exit Mrs. Hartshorn.]

Enter Lady Wronglove.

Miss *Not.* My dear, dear Lady *Wronglove*! you'll forgive me; I always come unreasonably, but now 'tis pure friendship, and my concern for you that brought me.

La. *Wron.* My dear, you know I am always glad to

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see you — but you'll excuse me, if I am not the company I wou'd be; I am mightily out of order of late. I hope Sir *Friendly's* well.

Miss Not. After the old rate, past the pleasures of life himself, and always snarling at us that are just come into 'em. — I do make such work with him. — He reads me every morning a lecture against lightness and gadding abroad, as he calls it; then do I teize him to death, and threaten him, if he won't let me do what I please, I'll chuse a new guardian that will.

La. Wrong. Come, don't disoblige him, my dear; for if you'll let me speak as a friend, you have a good natural town-wit, I own, and a great many pretty qualities; but, take my word, your interest and reputation will find a better account in trusting 'em under your uncle's conduct, than your own.

Miss Not. I don't know that; for all his tedious self-denying course of philosophy is only to make me a good old woman: just the condition of the miser's horse, when he had taught him to live upon one oat a day, the poor creature died. So I am to spend all my youth in learning to avoid pleasures that nature won't let me be able to taste when I'm old — Which is just as much as to say, don't drink while you are thirsty; because if you stay while you are choak'd, you won't care whether you drink or no.

La. Wrong. [*Aside.*] What an improving age is this! But, my dear, pray let me talk to you a little seriously, and I hope it won't be lost upon you; for you have an understanding that's uncommon at your age: I have observed, among all the unfortunate of our sex, more women have been undone by their wit than their simplicity: wit makes us vain, and when we are warm in our opinion of it, it sometimes hurries us through the very bounds of prudence, interest, and reputation; have a care of being singled out by the men. Women, like deer, are safest in the herd; she that breaks away from her acquaintance, may be most followed indeed; but the end of the chace is very often fatal.

Miss Not. But pray, madam! Now with submission, I think your argument won't hold; for a deer's business is to escape, but a woman's is to be caught; or else the world's strangely alter'd.

La. Wrong. Honourably, I grant you.

Miss Not. Honourably! That is to stand still like a poor dumb thing, and be tamely shot out of the herd ——— Now I think a young creature, that fairly trusts to her heels, and leads you twenty or thirty couple of brisk young fellows after her helter-skelter, over hills, hedges, hogs, and ditches, has ten times a fairer chance for her life; and if she is taken at last, I will hold twenty to one, among any people of taste, they'll say she's better meat by half.

La. Wrong. Well said, child! Upon my word you have a good heart: the address of a lover uses to be more terrible at your age.—You seem to have resolved upon not dying a maid already.

Miss Not. Between you and I, Lady *Wranglowe*, I have been positive in that this twelvemonth.

La. Wrong. Why then, since we are upon secrets; my dear, I must tell you, the road you are in is quite out of the way to be married: husbands and lovers are not caught with the same bait.

Miss Not. With all my heart, let me but catch lovers plenty, I'm satisfy'd; for if having one's will is the pleasure of life, I'm sure catching a husband is catching a tartar.—No, give me dear, precious liberty—content, and a cottage.

La. Wrong. And wou'd not a good husband content you?

Miss Not. And why must I expect a better than any of my neighbors? Do but look into the private comforts of the dear, fond, honourable couples about this town; and you'll find there's generally two beds, two purses, two tables, two coaches—two ways——And so, in most of their pleasures, an unmolested separation is the only chain that keeps 'em together——Now pray, madam, will you give me leave to be free, and ask you one question?

La. Wrong. Freely, my dear.

Miss Not. Then did you yourself never, upon no occasion, repent your being marry'd?

La. Wrong. That question's very particular, my dear.

Miss Not. Perhaps you'll pardon me, when I give you my reasons for asking; but if you never did repent it, I am resolv'd I won't be the first that shews you occasion to do it.

La. Wrong. I don't know, my dear, that ever I gave any body reason to think me uneasy at home; but you speak, child, as if you knew something that ought to make me so.

Miss Not. Then depend upon't, unless I were sure you were uneasy already, I'd as soon be lock'd up as tell you any thing.

L. Wrong. Well! suppose I am uneasy.

Miss Not. Pardon—I can't suppose it—But suppose you are not, then I should play a fool's part, I'm sure, to make you so.

La. Wrong. I am sure you know something of my lord; pray tell me.

Miss Not. Since I see you are uneasy, and I know you love him but too well; upon condition you'll think I only do it to help your cure, I will tell you: for when a woman is once sure she has a substantial reason to hate her husband, I should think the business must be half over.

La. Wrong. You make me impatient.

Miss Not. Let me think a little to soften it, as well as I can——What great fools these wise, over-grown prudes are—to tell the greatest secret of her life to a girl! To own her husband false, and all her sober charms neglected——But if she knew that young *Pill-Garlick* were the occasion of it too——Lurd! how her Blood wou'd rise! What a disfigurable condition wou'd my poor head-clothes be in? [*Aside.*] Well, madam, to begin then with the end of my story. In one word, my lord is grossly false to you, and to my knowledge has an appointment from a mistress this very

afternoon, to meet her in a hackney coach in the road to Chelsea.

La. Wrong. All this, my dear, except their place of meeting, I knew before; but how you come to know it, I confess amazes me.

Miss Not. Look you, madam, all I know is this—While my Lord *Wranglove* and Lord *George* stay'd at our house to speak with Lady *Gentle* this morning, I happened to sit in the next room to 'em, reading the last new play: where, among the rest of their precious discourse, I over-heard my Lord *Wranglove* tell Lord *George* the very appointment, word for word as I have told it to you.

La. Wrong. You did not hear her name?

Miss Not. No, nor what she was; only that she's pretty and young: for I remember Lord *George* ridiculed his fancy, and called her *green fruit*——Little, if you please, says t'other, but riper, I'll warrant her: and I had rather gather my fruit myself, than have it (like you) through the several hands that bring it to *Covent-Garden*.——

La. Wrong. The brutal thought!

Miss Not. When my lady came down, she made 'em stay dinner; which was no sooner done, but I immediately slipped away to tell you of it: for methought I was much touched with the wrong done to your ladyship, as if it had been to myself.

La. Wrong. My dear, I am extremely oblig'd to you.

Miss Not. I'm sure I meant well——For to know the worst, is not half so bad as to mistrust it.

La. Wrong. Infinitely oblig'd to you.

Miss Not. Oh! she's deliciously uneasy. [*Aside, and pleas'd.*] I'll tell you what I wou'd advise your ladyship to do: call for your hood and scarf, and an hackney coach to the door this minute——In the mean time I'll step home again, (for I am sure they are not gone yet, the tea was but just call'd for when I came away) and the moment my Lord *Wranglove* takes his leave, I'll send you word: then may you clap on your mask,

Drive after him, and in five minutes I'll lay my life you catch them together.

La. Wrong. Why then, if you'll do me the favour to send me that word, my dear, I shall have leisure in the mean time, perhaps, to improve upon your advice.

Miss Not. If you'll let one of your people send my servant for a chair, I'll go this minute.

La. Wrong. Here — Who's there?

[Mrs. Hartshorn at the door.]

Miss Not. Now I think I shall be even with his honour; I'll teach him to tell of favours before he has 'em at least: if I had not discovered him, in my conscience he had let madam discover me.

[Aside.]

La. Wrong. I wou'd not but have known this for the world.

Miss Not. I am overjoy'd I can serve your ladyship: you'll excuse my running away.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. Hartf. Here's a chair, madam.

Miss Not. Well, I'll take no leave, for I'll call again by and bye, to know your success.

Miss Not. Your servant, servant.

[Runs off.]

La. Wrong. Get me a hood and scarf, and a mask, and bid one of the footmen call an hackney coach to the door immediately. *[Exit Mrs. Hartshorn.]* What will become of me? Should not I strive to hate him? — I think I almost do. Is he not contemptible? Fogh! — What odious thing must this be, that he converses with! A woman without modesty has something sure of horror in her nature! What is it then in men, that over-looks so foul a coarseness in the heart, and makes 'em infamously fond of shame and outside? — I blush to think on't. — How tame must he suppose me if I bear this usage? I'll let him see I have a spirit as daring as his own, and as resentful too: since he dares be base, I cannot bear but he should see I know him so. To sigh in secret o'er my wrongs, and pay his falshood the

regards I only owe to his truth, is more than nature can submit to.

*When once the nuptial bond's by him destroy'd,
The obligations of the wife are void.*

[Exit.]

SCENE *changes to Lady Gentle's House.*

Lady Gentle, Lord Wronglove, and Lord George, at a tea-table.

La. Gen. [*To Lord Wronglove.*] Come, come, my lord, you must stay another dish, indeed.

Ld. Wrang. Upon my faith, madam, my business is of the last concern; your ladyship knows I don't like to start from good company.

La. Gen. Well! I e'en give you over, you grow perfectly good for nothing.

Ld. Wrang. The truth on't is, madam, we fond husbands are fit for nothing—but our wives.

La. Gen. Come, none of your railery upon one that's too good for you.

Ld. Wrang. Why, she has some high qualities indeed, madam, that I confess are far above my merit; but I'm endeavouring every day to deserve 'em as fast as I can.

La. Gen. Go, go! You deserve nothing at all; now you disoblige me.

Ld. Wrang. I shall take a better opportunity to make myself amends for going so soon; I am your ladyship's most humble servant.—*Mrs. Conquest*, pray take care of *Lord George*.

Mrs. Can. O! he shall want for nothing, my lord; pray, do you take the same care of the lady you are going to.

Ld. Wrang. Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit Lord Wronglove.*]

Ld. Geo. My Lord *Wronglove* is a very pretty gentleman; and yet how unaccountable 'tis to hear good sense *jest* upon marriage!

La. Gent. My lord has so much good sense, that he does not mean what he says, I dare swear for him.

Ld. Geo. Indeed, madam, I can't think he does; I never saw any thing amiss in his actions, either at home or abroad.

La. Gent. Nor I, indeed: and I think your lordship very much to be commended; you love to put the fairest construction upon things; it's a certain sign of good sense, and good principles.

Ld. Geo. Your ladyship has so much of both, that I can't help being proud of any thing that recommends me to your esteem.

La. Gent. Upon my word, my lord, you have a great share on't, and I think very deservedly: 'tis not a common thing in this town, to find a gentleman of your figure that has courage enough to keep marriage in countenance, especially when it's so much the mode to be severe upon't.

Ld. Geo. Now that to me is an intolerable vanity, to see a man ashamed of being honourably happy, because 'tis the fashion to be viciously wretched—I don't know how it may be with other people; but if I were marry'd, I shou'd as much tremble to speak lightly of my wife, as my religion.

Mrs. Con. O! the hypocritical monster——When he knows I know, [*aside*] if he were to be hanged, he'd scarce think it a reprieve to be married——There's roguery at the bottom of all this, I'm sure——The Devil does not use to turn saint for nothing.

La. Gent. I am in hopes your lordship's good opinion of marriage will persuade you not to be long out of it: we that feel the happiness of a condition ourselves, naturally wish our friends in it.

Mrs. Con. What do you think of me, my lord? You know I have been about you a great while.

Ld. Geo. Fy! fy! You marry! A mere rake!

Mrs. Con. O! but I fancy now, a man of your sobriety, and stay'd temper, wou'd soon reform me.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] This subtle devil smokes me!——

W'are mortals, faith——It shews her a little jealous, however,

Mrs. Con. I'll be whipp'd if ever you marry more to your mind; what signifies two or three thousand pounds in one's fortune, where you are sure it wou'd be made up in good-humour and obedience?

Ld. Geo. And considering how intimate a foot you and I have always convers'd upon; what a venerable figure shou'd I make in the solemn authority of an husband, pretending to command you?

La. Gent. O! if you were married, there wou'd be but one will between you.

Ld. Geo. There's the danger, madam; being but one, we shou'd certainly squabble who shou'd have it. I shou'd like Mrs. Conquest, perhaps, for my wife's companion: one as a light allay to the softness of the other's temper: but if I were once fix'd in love, and shou'd unfortunately bolt upon the least glimpse of jealousy, I am such a slave to tenderness, I know 'twou'd break my heart.

Mrs. Con. Now cou'd I wash his face with my tea. [Aside.]

La. Gent. Well, I'm confident my lord wou'd make an extreme good husband.

Ld. Geo. I don't know but I really might, madam, if I cou'd persuade any woman, beside your ladyship, to think so.

Mrs. Con. [Aside.] How artfully the monster screws himself into her good opinion; I must take him down a little.—Pray, my lord, how many women have you had of late, by way of balm, to heal the slight wound I gave you?

Ld. Geo. Upon my faith, madam, I had my wound and cure from the same person: my passion for you went forward like *Penelope's* web; whatever your eye did in the day, a very short reflection upon your temper unravell'd at night; so that if you will needs know the truth, I have not been reduc'd of late to apply myself for relief to any body but your ladyship. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

[Affects an insulting laugh.]

Mrs. Con. Well, he has a glorious assurance!

Ld. Geo. I fancy, *Mrs. Conquest*, you measure my principles by your own; for by your question you seem to think me a very wild creature.

Mrs. Con. O fye, my lord! So far from it, that I never saw any thing so astonishingly modest.

Ld. Geo. Not so modest neither, madam; but if my *Lady Gentle* will give me leave, I dare use you most intolerably for this.

La. Gent. Ev'n as you please, my lord; for I confess her assurance is enough to dash any one out of countenance.

Ld. Geo. Does your ladyship hear that, madam? Remember now, that I am allowed the modest person; but to let you see, that in a just cause I scorn to take the advantage of my character, I'll lay it aside for once, and with an honest freedom tell you, your attempts upon me are vain; you are homely, downright homely; and if she were not a-kin to me, I wou'd as soon marry my grandmother.

Mrs. Con. Ah, poor soul! every body knows, as well as myself, I am more than tolerably handsome: and (which you are ready to tear your flesh at) the whole town knows you think so.

Ld. Geo. Madam——did your ladyship ever hear so transcendant an assurance?

La. Gent. Nay, I'm on your side, my lord—I think you can't be too free with her.

Ld. Geo. I'll tell your ladyship what this creature did once; such an instance of her intrepid self-sufficiency.

La. Gent. Pray let's hear it. Ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. With all my heart, I'll be heard too.

Ld. Geo. I'll tell you, madam——About two years ago, I happened to make a country visit to my *Lady Conquest*, her mother; and one day at the table, I remember, I was particularly pleas'd with the entertainment; and, upon enquiry, found that the bill of fare was under the direction of *Mademoiselle* here: now it happened, at that time, I was myself in want of a house-

keeper; upon which account I thought it wou'd not be amiss, if I now and then paid her a little particular civility: to be short, I fairly told her, I had a great mind to have a plain good house-wife about me; and dropt some broad hints, that the place might be her's for asking——Wou'd you believe it, madam, if I'm alive, the creature grew so vain upon't, so deplorably mistook my meaning, that she told me her fortune depended upon her mother's will, and therefore she could receive no proposals of marriage without her consent: Ha! ha! Now after that unfortunate blunder of her's, whether I ever gave my lady the least trouble about the business, I leave to the small remainder of her own conscience.

Mrs. Con. Madam, as I hope to be married, the poor wretch fell downright in love with me! For tho' he design'd only to make two days stay with us, it was above three months before I was able to get rid of him. When he came first, indeed, he was a pretty sort of a tolerable impudent young fellow; but before he left us, (O the power of beauty!) I most barbarously reduc'd him to a sighing, humble, downright daintiness and modesty,

La. Gent. Ha! ha! Pray which of you two am I to believe all this while?

Ld. Geo. Madam, if there's any faith in my senses, her only charms then were, and are still, not in raising of passion, but paste. I own, I did voraciously admire her prodigious knack of making cheese-cakes, tarts, custards, and syllabubs; ha! ha! ha!

La. Gent. Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Con. You see, madam, what 'tis to let him be ever so little out of one's hands: now his very modesty is impudence: for to deny his being in love with me to another, is ten times more insolent, than his first owning it to me.

La. Gent. Pshaw! words signify nothing——Did he ever own it under his hand?

Mrs. Con. His hand! Ha! ha! ha! madam——as I am a living creature, if I have one, I have five hundred

billet-doux of his, where he has confess'd such things of my wit and parts, and my eyes and my air, and my shape and my charms, that——Nay, he tells me in one, I have more natural beauties the moment I rise out of my bed in the morning, than the whole drawing-room upon a birth-day by candle-light. There's for you!

Ld. Geo. And she believ'd it, madam——Ha! ha! ha! That's well enough.

Mrs. Con. Why, I believe still you think so——Then every line of 'em is so cramm'd with sincerity, sighs, hopes, fears, flames, darts, pains, pangs, and passion, that in my conscience, if a body were to set 'em on fire, the flame wou'd never go out.

La. Gent. Well, if you are in love, ho, this is certainly the newest way of wooing that ever was.

Ld. Geo. Whether I'm in love or no, I leave to your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. And if your ladyship should give it against him, whether or no I have reason to be vain upon't, let the world judge.

L. Gent. The world, I believe, will think better of you both, when you are married.

Ld. Geo. In the mean time, I believe, our surest comfort will be to think well of ourselves, and let it alone.

[All rise.]

Mrs. Con. I am glad to find you have modesty enough to suppose marriage wou'd make us think worse of one another.

Ld. Geo. O fy! Mrs. Conquest, the more you are known, the more you must be lik'd,

} Both affectedly.

Mrs. Con. Is it then possible that you cou'd like me?

La. Gent. Ha! ha!

[Going to the tea-table.]

Ld. Geo. If it were possible I cou'd like any thing out of matrimony, it wou'd be you.

Mrs. Con. Well, but tell me, do you like me as

I am; how do you know but you may persuade me into it?

Ld. Geo. Like you——Umh! I can't tell——let's see—— [*Looking on her.*]——give me your hand.

Mrs. Con. There—— [*Strikes it into his.*]

Ld. Geo. Now I must press it gently, to know if touching you keeps any correspondence with my heart——Humh!——A well-flesh'd hand, indeed!——

[*Ogling her.*]

Mrs. Con. O lud! not so hard tho'.

Ld. Geo. Now try your other forces——look upon me.

Mrs. Con. There—— [*Staring wildly on him.*]

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] She dares not, tho' in raillery, look kindly on me—I like her for't——This over-acted boldness, to save her modesty at this time, looks like secret inclination.

Mrs. Con. Well, how do you find yourself? Have I power?——Do you burn much?

Ld. Geo. Umh! No, I'm a little too low for a fever——There's a small pulse indeed——Different sexes, like steel and flint, can't well meet without a sort of striking light between 'em; not but it goes out as fast as it comes in——One farther trial of your power, and I'll tell you more..

Mrs. Con. Come, come, what is't? I'll do't.

Ld. Geo. Turn away your face, hold your fan before it. Now draw your hand slowly from me, and if you wou'd not have me think this lightness of your humour a direct indifference, let me perceive a gentle hold at parting, as tho' you left a tender heart upon the pressure.

[*She does as directed, and runs from him.*]

Mrs. Con. Has your ladyship any tea left?

Ld. Geo. Death! That softening touch has shot me to the soul.

Mrs. Con. [*Aside.*] Let me observe him well, for, faith, I try'd my utmost force, and even pleas'd myself in hopes to touch him.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] How vain a coxcomb am I? This girl has fool'd me to believe she likes me——That

there should be such pleasure in the flattery of another's good opinion!—There's something in the open freedom of her humour, so much beyond the close reserve of formal prudery, that—death! if she were of any price but marriage—But I'm a fool to think of her—

[Walks apart.

Mrs. Con. Humh! the symptoms are right—Hah—*Courage, ma fille*, the gentleman has a hole in his heart yet.

Enter a servant, who gives Lord George a letter.

Ld. Geo. Oh! there, come in good time—Now to drive out one poison with another—[Goes to Lady Gentle.] Madam, if your ladyship's at leisure—I have the bills ready.

La. Gent. I am ashamed to give your lordship this trouble.

Ld. Geo. A trifle, madam, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, if your ladyship pleases to look upon 'em, I think they are all hundred pounds. The rest I have about me in gold.

La. Gent. If your lordship pleases, we'll reckon in the next room—Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

[Exit Lady Gentle and Lord George.

Eight hundred pounds, and the rest in gold, upon her bare word of honour! He'd hardly make that compliment only to give me jealousy—The mortal's in earnest, that's certain—And what wicked way he proposes to find his account with her, I am afraid to think—Let me see, I know there will be deep play here to-night—I have a thought in my head, that perhaps may lay a block in his way to her—Not but if there is such a thing as impregnable virtue, I dare swear my Lady Gentle is mistress of it; but then, on the other side, he has a consummate assurance, that's full as unformountable. And when the impudent hopes of a lover are like his, covered with modesty, it alters the case strangely—No woman

can then be positive what will become of her——Her not suspecting his design puts him but in a fairer way of carrying it on——Ah lud! 'I don't like it.——He'll certainly——Well! let him do what he will, he can't marry her, that's one comfort, however.

[*Exit.*]



A C T I I I.

S C E N E, *Lord Wronglove's House.*

Enter Miss Notable alone.

Miss Not. **S**O! this has been a day of business——I think now I am pretty even with his lordship; and if I cou'd but draw in Lord *George* to be his rival now, I should touch the very tip of happiness——For then to have the noise of these two lovers draw two or three score more after me, which it certainly wou'd: for when once a woman's the fashion, every body follows her; she fills like a musick-subscription, tho' there's nothing in't, nobody will be out on't——And then to have the full pleasure of mortifying Mrs. *Conquest* too, that's always holding her nose over me, as if I was not fit to be out of my bib and apron. If I don't make as good a rout in the town as she, 'tis very hard——Sure!——I'll forbid 'em all to toast her, that's positive.

Enter Lord George.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Here she is, faith, and alone! Now, if I can but flatter her into my party, my business is half over.——So! my little *Venus*!

Miss Not. Bless me—This is lucky—I vow, my lord, you frightened me.

Ld. Geo. Well, and what makes your pretty ladyship here, now none of the family's at home?

Miss Not. O! My lady will be at home presently! But pray, how came your lordship here then?

Ld. Geo. Why, my life, I chanc'd to be driving by, and perhaps saw you go in. *[Takes her by the hand.]*

Miss Not. Well, and what then?

Ld. Geo. Why then, upon enquiry, I found you were here alone, and that made me come in—My dear miss! how charming you look to-day!

Miss Not. Pshaw!

Ld. Geo. What's the matter, my soul?

Miss Not. To tell me I look charming, and then call me-miss.

Ld. Geo. O! I ask a thousand pardons.

Miss Not. No, dear Lord George, never call me miss again, you don't call Mrs. *Conquest* so; and tho' she's bigger, and more out of shape, you know, than I, I'm sure I'm as much a woman in my heart as she; nay, and in my passions too: for I cou'd kill any woman that you'd rob me of a lover, and die for the dear man that you'd not be won from me.

Ld. Geo. O the pretty tendernefs! But, my dear, take heed how you look upon me, for I am fam'd for assurance; and, if once encourag'd, egad my hope sets no bounds to its impudence, but falls downright to resolving, and cocks its hat to the fair one's face, tho' in the very fury of her virtue.

Miss Not. I fancy now you're as gentle as the rest of your brother beaux, whose greatest assurance is only of bragging of more than you have.

Ld. Geo. Nay, if you doubt my virtues, child, I'll give you a taste of 'em, my dear. *[Kisses her.]*

Miss Not. Hold! hold! O lud! The deuce take you for me!

Ld. Geo. Death! what a pouting lip the rogue has! Egad! I think my friend *Wronglove's* in the right on't sure.

Miss Not. Besides, do you think this buffing is any proof of your courage? *[Affectedly grave.]*

Ld. Geo. Why then, my dear, to prevent all mistakes for the future, I now give you fair warning—If you have a mind I shou'd not like you, don't flatter me any more; for I tell you, I'm a downright believing puppy, and, upon the least hint of a hope, can no more forbear proceeding——

Miss Not. Look you, my lord, all this is but stuff; for, upon my word, you'll find it no easy matter to flatter me: I know well enough how you're dispos'd of.

Ld. Geo. Why then, by all the pains, pangs, and torments——In short, I'm a fool; I won't speak a word more to you.

Miss Not. Fy! fy! you had better give yourself these airs to Mrs. *Conquest*.

Ld. Geo. I don't know but I had, madam; for I suppose you'll tell my Lord *Wronglove* of it.

Miss Not. Ah! poor soul! If Mrs. *Conquest* lik'd you no better than I do my Lord *Wronglove*, you'd think yourself a miserable creature.

Ld. Geo. If Mrs. *Conquest* lik'd me but half so well as I like you, I'm sure she'd be a miserable creature.

Miss Not. Umh! how can you design upon me so?

Ld. Geo. How can you think to impose upon me so?

Miss Not. My lord, I shall take it very ill if you tell me of my Lord *Wronglove*.

Ld. Geo. Then perhaps, madam, I shan't take it well to be told of Mrs. *Conquest*.

Miss Not. My Lord *Wronglove*!

Ld. Geo. Mrs. *Conquest*!

Miss Not. I'd have you know, my lord, of all mankind he's the farthest from my thoughts.

Ld. Geo. And I'd have you know, madam, of all womankind Mrs. *Conquest*'s as far out of mine.

Miss Not. Lard! the assurance of some men!

Ld. Geo. Look you, madam, in short I can prove what I say; and I hold ten pound of tea to a pinch of snuff, you won't let me prove it: come, and I'll take the same bett of you, that you don't prove to me what you said to me of my Lord *Wronglove*.

Miss Not. Come, it's done!

Ld. Geo. Done!

Miss Not. Done, for both!

Ld. Geo. Done!

Miss Not. Why then, to prove that I am innocent of the least inclination for him, I own he has teased me these two months; and because I was resolv'd to give him his answer and his punishment at the same time, I this very afternoon made him an appointment; then went immediately and told my Lady *Wranglove* he was to meet a mistress at such an hour, to my knowledge; and so sent her in a fury after him, to catch 'em together.

Ld. Geo. But how cou'd you escape yourself all this while?

Miss Not. O! I did not tell her it was I; for as soon as I had blown up her jealousy, I whipt into a hackney-coach, and got to my lord before her; where I just popp'd out my head to him, and told him, in a pretended fright, my lady had dogg'd him, and I durst not stay; then drove away as fast as I cou'd, and e'en left her to make up accounts with him.

Ld. Geo. Why then, my life, I do pronounce; that the stoutest wife of 'em all, with the spirit of revenge in her, could not have better buſtled through this buſineſs than you have.

Miss Not. And to let you ſee, ſir, that I never do deſign him any favour, I give you leave to tell him, that I ſent my lady after him——Which if he does, I'm ſure my Lord *Wranglove* muſt ſuſpect an intimacy between us. [*Aside.*] Nay, and if you'll but ſtay a moment, you'll have an opportunity, for I know he'll be at home preſently.

Ld. Geo. Then you are but juſt come from him!

Miss Not. The minute you ſaw me come in—And now, ſir, if you can but give me half as good a proof that your heart is innocent of Mrs. *Conqueſt*——why 'tis poſſible (when you've been about ſeven years in the ſame mind) I may then begin to think whether I ſhall conſider of it or no.

Ld. *Geo.* A notable encouragement, truly! But to let you see, madam, I can't bear the scandal of a passion I'm not guilty of, as the last proof of my innocence, if either she doubts of my indifference, or you of my inclination, I am content to own both before your faces.

Miss *Not.* And so afterwards deny both, behind both our backs. Indeed, you must think again, that won't do——An old bite.

Ld. *Geo.* Come, I'll do more—I'll pretend to trust you with my passion for a third person, and give you leave, in the tenderest touches art or woman's wit can paint it, to tell it that third person while Mrs. *Conquest* is by.

Miss *Not.* Umh! this has a face.

Ld. *Geo.* Nay, with a mask upon't too; for while I am convincing you I don't care a button for her, I impose upon a third person purely to make a secret of my passion for you.

Miss *Not.* Better still—But, when I have a mind to pull off the mask, you shan't refuse to show your face; for I don't care a man shou'd be asham'd of his passion neither.

Ld. *Geo.* As you please, for that.

Miss *Not.* I begin to like this strangely—This will teize Mrs. *Conquest* to death——But now the difficulty is to find out this third person—It must be one I'm acquainted with—What think you of my lady *Wronglone*?

Ld. *Geo.* Umh! No, I don't care to affront the wife of my friend.

Miss *Not.* Ah! Do you think any of the sober souls about town are ever angry in their hearts to hear a man likes 'em.

Ld. *Geo.* That's true; 'tis possible her resentment might let a man die in his bed after it——But 'tis not worth one's while to quarrel with him about a woman I don't like.

Miss *Not.* Nay, I wou'd not run you into any hazard—unless 'twere upon my own account——And now I think on't, I'll reserve that quarrel to myself.

[*Afide.*

Ld. Geo. Come! I have found one—the properest person in the world is my Lady *Gentle*—You know you are all in the house together; her husband Sir *William's* in the country; I have no acquaintance with him; and if I lose her's by it, I don't care sixpence.

Miss Not. I like your choice very well—but I doubt it will require some art to manage her; for, to say the truth, the woman is most fantastically simple: the very word love out of any mouth but her husband's, will make her start as if a gun went off.

Ld. Geo. Therefore, my dear, it must be done as if you did not do it: you must go to her in all the disorder in the world, as if I had had the impudence to endeavour to bribe you into my assistance.

Miss Not. Right! or I'll go first, and quarrel with my uncle till he makes me cry, and then come in with my eyes swell'd, and sobbing, as if I was almost choak'd with the affront you had offer'd me, and then call you a thousand villains for daring to propose such an impudent thing to me.

Ld. Geo. Admirable! — Egad, the child's a bar's length in experience above the stoutest of her sex—Hark! I hear a coach stop!

Miss Not. Pshaw! Deuce take him, it's certainly my lord! How shall we do?

Ld. Geo. Why, if you'll give me leave, my life, I'll call at your house in an hour, and there we'll settle every point to a tittle.

Miss Not. With all my heart, I won't stay for my lady; I'll go home now: but here comes my lord; you shall see first how I'll use him.

Ld. Geo. Don't trouble yourself, my life, it will only give him a jealousy, and do us no service.

Miss Not. Indeed! methinks if I am not afraid of his jealousy, you need not.

Ld. Geo. My soul, I ask ten thousand pardons for my stupidity.

Enter Lord Wronglove, and steps Miss Notable, who seems to talk gravely with him.

Ld. Geo. Egad, I can hardly believe my senses; if this girl's character were in a play, people that had not seen it, wou'd swear the notableness of her head were above nature.

Ld. Wrong. [*To Miss Notable.*] Did my Lord George tell you I told him that you were to meet me?

Miss Not. That's no matter; it's sufficient I know you told him: but I thought at least you had seen enough of the world to know, that a confidant was the safest disguise for a rival.

Ld. Wrong. I am sorry your ladyship has such an opinion of me.

Miss Not. Indeed, sir, I shall not reproach you; I have satisfied myself in serving you as you deserve for it——There's one can tell you how too, and so your servant—My lord, you'll remember. [*To Lord George.*

[*Exit Miss Not.*

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! ha! Why how now, friend! What, are you my rival?

Ld. Geo. Ha! ha! ha! Why, faith, I am very near being one of 'em; for I believe the child will think she has had luck, if the whole town is not so in a fortnight.

Ld. Wrong. But prithee how came she to know I ever made you a confidant of my affair with her? I am afraid you have been thoughtless.

Ld. Geo. No, by all that's honest——But she has told me more than you cou'd tell me.

Ld. Wrong. What?

Ld. Geo. That she herself told my Lady *Wronglove* of your appointment with her this afternoon, and (as I suppose you have since found) sent her in a hackney-coach after you.

Ld. Wrong. The devil!

Ld. Geo. Nay, 'twas a home push, faith!

Ld. Wrong. Home! quotha! Egad it's time for me

to knock off, I shall never come up with her: but what cou'd she propose by telling you of it?

Ld. Geo. Why a fresh lover, I suppose——She found me a little tardy here in addressing her; and imagining my small virtue might proceed from a regard to you, to convince me of her indifference to you, she very fairly told me how she had serv'd you, to open an easier passage in my conscience for my passion to her.

Ld. Wrong. Sir, I give you joy.

Ld. Geo. And faith, sir, I expect it, though not as you do, from the green youth of her person, but the plump maturity of her understanding——in helping me to another.

Ld. Wrong. Riddles!

Ld. Geo. To be short; I think I have bit the babe; for in return, to convince her of my indifference to Mrs. Conquest, I have impos'd upon her to discover my real passion to Lady Gentle, before Mrs. Conquest's face: and this, sir, with your leave, is, upon my honour, all the use I design to make of her.

Ld. Wrong. Faith, tis a glorious one——All *Macbiavel* was boys-play to it——Look you, sir; if you have a fancy to the small remainder of her composition——pray be free——

Ld. Geo. Dear sir, not so much as the squeeze of her little finger: but I thought I might make bold with her virtue, and not rob your *gout* of a morsel.

Ld. Wrong. Not a step farther, faith——I shall e'en turn about my nag, and go home: a little humble hare-hunting, by way of taking the air, I can make a shift to come up to; but to scamper, neck or nothing, after a mad galloping jade of a hind, that will run you strait an end out of a country, requires a little more metal than I am master of.

Ld. Geo. Come, come! you are sportsman enough to know, that as pride first humbles a coquet into the loosest encouragements to gain a man, so the same pride very often piques her into the granting the last favour, rather than lose him.

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Ld. Wrong. I am sorry I have made this rout about it, fir; I expect to have my wife shock me too.

Ld. Geo. O! pray, how did you come off? Did my lady see you in the coach?

Ld. Wrong. I am not sure, faith; but whether she did or not, she shan't convince me she did.

Ld. Geo. Where did you leave her?

Ld. Wrong. Why, as soon as the child told me from her coach, that my wife was in another behind me, I advis'd her to go off; then whipt up my wooden glasses, and stood cross the road, to prevent the nymph's being follow'd: when she was out of sight, I order'd the fellow to drive to town as fast as *black and bay* could lay legs to the ground; and, having the fortune of better horses, I just got time enough to stop, and give a fellow a guinea to cut the braces of the coach that came after me; which, while I drove gently on, I saw him do; so e'en came away, and left her ladyship fairly overset in the middle of a swinging shower, at *Hyde-Park Corner*.

Ld. Geo. How will she get home?

Ld. Wrong. Umh! She will have wit enough in her passion, I presume, to send for another coach; or, if not, it will be a very pretty cool walk over the park for her.

Ld. Geo. What an unfortunate creature is a jealous wife!

[*Brush whispers Lord Wronglove, and exit.*]

Ld. Wrong. My wife's come home: now, if you have a curiosity, you shall see how I'll manage her.

Ld. Geo. Pray, fir, don't let me be witness of your conjugal douceurs; but, if you please, I'll step into the next room a little, for I have two or three words to write: I must appoint the Count to meet me at Lady Gentle's after the play.

Ld. Wrong. Do so then——Take this key, you'll find paper in the bureau.

Ld. Geo. Quick! quick! I hear her——*Box knocks.*

[*Exit Lord George.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove, as from the Street, in a Mood and Scarf, and her Petticoat pin'd up.

La. Wrong. So, sir, you are come home, I see.

Ld. Wrong. Yes, madam, and you have been abroad, I see; will you never give over making yourself ridiculous to the very servants? Was this a dress to go out in, or a condition for a woman of your quality to walk home in? Death! what must people take you for?—
For shame!

La. Wrong. My Lord, when a husband grows monstrous, a wife may well become ridiculous.

Ld. Wrong. Look you, madam, while your jealousy keeps within bounds, I shall take little notice of it; but when its idle extravagances break in upon my reputation, I shall resent it as I ought. You may think me an ill husband, if you please; but I won't have the world think so, till I give 'em occasion.

La. Wrong. Insolent!

Ld. Wrong. I thought I had told you in the morning of a foolish letter, that was brought by mistake to me instead of my servant: your not taking my word, methinks, was not over-civil, madam; and your since dogging my servant, instead of me, to the very place of appointment, was extremely obliging. The fellow has confess'd to me, since he came home, that in his fear to be seen, he got your coach overthrown in the middle of the highway, while you ridiculously pursued him: a mighty reputable figure you must make, while you were getting out of it, no doubt!

La. Wrong. Come, come, my Lord, I have not lost my senses yet——I follow'd you, and saw you in the coach, when the confident creature reach'd out to you from another, to tell you, I suppose, that I was just behind you. You may wrong me, but you can never blind me.

[In a scornful smile.]

Ld. Wrong. Look you, madam, that manner in speaking shews too much transport; and——colour does not become your face.

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La. Wrong. [*Taking him up short.*] Some people think it does now: all men are not of your opinion, my Lord; my complexion may not please you, perhaps; but I have known many a lover find an appetite only from a husband's losing it.

Ld. Wrong. I won't suppose, madam, you'll suffer any man to like you more than he ought to do.

La. Wrong. O sir! don't you depend more upon my discretion than your own.——We wives, as well as our husbands, love to have some idle body or other to flatter us into humour, when the time hangs upon our hands.

Ld. Wrong. You are pleasant, madam.

La. Wrong. Marriage wou'd be an unfortunate frolick indeed, if a woman's happiness were to die with her husband's inclination.

Ld. Wrong. Waggish, I protest.

La. Wrong. O there's nothing like a modish husband, to refine the unbred virtue of a wife into all the pretty liberties in fashion.

Ld. Wrong. Good company, or let me die.

La. Wrong. I knew the day, when my Lady *Honey-Moan* wou'd have blush'd, almost into tears, at the alarm of a bare civil thing from any man but her husband; but from the well-bred example of his conscience, she has now most undauntedly got the better of her own, and stands buff at the head of the mode, without the least tincture of virtue to put her out of countenance.

Ld. Wrong. Why now, my dear——this is something; if you'd but always treat me with good-humour, you and I shou'd never dispute as long as we live.

La. Wrong. Monster!

Ld. Wrong. For you know I have often told you, that if ever I shou'd be weak enough to wrong you, a gentle complaint and good words wou'd work me to any thing; when the pride of an insolent reproach wou'd be but adding fuel to my folly, and make it flame the higher: but now I see that you are convinc'd that your suspicions were groundless, and that you are

sensible, if they had not, that defiance is utterly the wrong way to reform me; you shall find that all this tenderness and temper that you now treat me with shall not be thrown away upon me.

La. Wrong. Insolent! Provoking devil!

Ld. Wrong. I am glad we are friends, with all my heart; I am, upon my soul, my dear.

La. Wrong. Villain!

Ld. Wrong. O my dear! I had like to have forgot one thing, and since we are now come to a right understanding, I'll tell you; if ever you and I should happen to disagree, I beg of you, for your own sake, never give me any hard language; because there is no being certain, but, in one of my brutal fits, I may let you cry yourself half blind for it before I forgive you.

La. Wrong. Forgive me! I have a soul as much above the fear of you, as are your injuries below my scorn — I laugh at both.

Ld. Wrong. Ay but, my life, I wou'd not have you trust me; for if ever you shou'd accuse me wrongfully, I know my foolish temper so well, that, in my conscience, in pure spight, I believe — I believe — I believe I shou'd keep a girl.

La. Wrong. My Lord, this affectation won't redress my injuries; and however you deceive yourself, in your unquestion'd power of doing wrong, you'll find there is a force of justice yet above your strength, a curb of law to check abandon'd principles; nor am I yet so poor in interest or friends, jealous of my wrongs as of their own, but I may find a time and place to make your proud heart humble for this usage.

Ld. Wrong. Death and hell! dare to insult me with such another thought, these walls shall mark your bounds of liberty: this dismal house becomes your prison: debar'd of light, of converse, or relief, you live immur'd for life: and, let me see that big-mouth'd friend, or interest then, that can unlock a husband's power to keep you — — When my wife talks warmly to me, she shall ask my leave first.

La. Wrong. Never. — Such leave as you took to give me cause for't, I take to tell you of it.

Ld. Wrong. We are upon an equal foot: I won't have you so familiar in your accusations. Be warn'd, and fling me not to use my power: you may sooner make me an ill husband than a tame one.

La. Wrong. So may you me a wife, my Lord: and what is't binds me more to bear an injury than you? I have seen you laugh at passive obedience between a prince and people; and, in the sense of nature, I can't see why 'tis not as ridiculous from a wife to an injurious husband.

Ld. Wrong. Their hazard is at least unequal: a people may be freed by struggling; but when a fetter'd wife presumes, th' insulted husband's sure to make her chain the shorter.

La. Wrong. Her mind, at least, is more at liberty; the ease of giving shame for pain, stands yet in some degree of pleasure: the wretch that's basely kill'd, falls better satisfied to see his murderer bleed.

Ld. Wrong. Nay, now I crave your mercy, madam; I find I mistook your grievance all this while. — It seems, then, to be refus'd the pleasure of reproaching, is what you can't bear — and when you are wrong'd, to lock up your tongue is the greatest cruelty your tyrant can impose upon you. — If that be the hardship, pray be easy; when you please, in the name of thunder, go on, spare no invectives, but open the spout of your eloquence, and see with what a calm, connubial resignation, I will both hear and bow to the chastisement.

La. Wrong. Poor helpless affectation! This shew of temper is as much dissembled as your innocence. — I know, in spite of all your harden'd thoughts, to hear your guilt confronted thus must gall your soul: patients don't use to smile while their fresh wounds are prob'd, nor criminals to laugh under the smart of justice.

Ld. Wrong. My life, you begin extremely well, and

with abundance of fire ; only give me leave to observe one thing to you, that as you draw towards an end, don't forget the principal thing you were going to say.

La. Wrong. How poor ! how low ! how wretched is a guilty mind, that stands without a blush the shock of accusation !——

Ld. Wrong. Hold, madam, don't mistake me neither ; for I allow you to accuse me of nothing, but of what we fine gentlemen think is next to nothing——a little gallantry.

La. Wrong. Audacious, horrid wretch ! and dare you own the fact ?

Ld. Wrong. Own it ! no, no, if I were guilty I wou'd not do that, but I give you leave to suppose me so, because, by what you say, I fancy it wou'd ease your heart to reproach me ; tho' methinks——it's very hard that demonstration won't convince you of my innocence.

La. Wrong. Demonstration !

Ld. Wrong. Demonstration ! Ay, demonstration ! For if I were guilty, pray who cou'd better know it than myself ? and have not I, told you with my own mouth 'tis no such thing ? Pray what demonstration can be plainer ?

La. Wrong. I find you are resolv'd to stand it to the last ; but since I know your guilt, I owe myself the justice to resent it. When the weak wife transgresses, the husband's blood has leave to boil ; his fury's justified by honour ; the wrong admits no measure of amends ; his reputation bleeds, and only blood can stanch it. And I must tell you, sir, that in the scales of conscience, the husband's falsehood is an equal injury, and equal too you'll find the wife's resentment : henceforth be sure you're private in your shame : for if I trace you to another proof, expect as little mercy for the wretch you doat on, as you yourself wou'd shew to the felonious lover.

My wrongs through her shall shoot you to the soul,

You shall not find I am an injur'd fool. [Exit.

Ld. Wrong. Well said 'egad, if she could but love

with half the fire she can hate, I wou'd not desire to pass my time in better company——Not but, between me and myself, our dear consorts have something a hard time on't: we are a little apt to take more liberty than we give——but people in power don't care to part with it, whether it be lawful or no. To bear her insolence is positively intolerable——What shall I do with her?——I know no way of making an honourable peace, better than sword in hand——Ev'n let her pride swell till it bursts, and then 'tis possible she may hear reason.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Here's Sir *Friendly Moral*, my Lord.

Ld. Wrong. Desire him to walk in——I hold fifty pounds the old gentleman comes to school me about his young kinswoman; if he does, I know he'll do it handsomely: for, give him his due, with all his severity of principles, he is as good-humour'd, and as well-bred, as if he had no principles at all.

Enter a Servant with Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I am your most humble servant.

Ld. Wrong. Sir *Friendly*! this is kind, indeed! Chairs there——Well! how goes the goat, sir?

Sir Fr. In troth very untowardly; for I can hardly walk with it——Will your lordship give me leave——

Ld. Wrong. To stand upon any thing but ceremony.

Enter Lord George from the inner room.

Ld. Geo. Nuncle, I am glad to see you.

Sir Fr. Hah! Monsieur *Brilliant*, and in a sober visit after sun-set!

Ld. Geo. O dear sir, I am grown a fellow of the most retir'd conversation in the world.

Sir Fr. Your reformation is not of a very long date, I'm afraid; for if I don't mistake, I saw you

But yesterday at the Thatch'd house, with a napkin upon your head; at the window, in a very hopeless company.

Ld. Geo. How! how, nuncle! Two men of title, and a foreign Count; hopeless company!

Sir Fr. Most deplorable! Your Count's a counter, and only passes for what he is in his own country; your men of title are indeed no counterfeits, every body sees into their worth, Sir *Bubble Squander*, and my Lord *Larivels*: but the sparks I observ'd you with, were *Domefirst* the jockey, and *Touchum* the gamester; as infamous a fellow as ever broke the head of a box-keeper.

Ld. Geo. Pshaw! People that play keep all company; but to let you see I had my account in it, I had a mind to bite Sir *Bubble* in a horse-match, and so took these two fellows with me to let him into the secret.

Sir Fr. A fine instance of our modish morals indeed! To make one's conscience a bawd to the dishonour of biting a wretch of perhaps an hundred pounds! What a shame it is the world should not call it by its true name, cheating, that men of honour might not be guilty of it!

Ld. Geo. O, sir, the name, I grant you, wou'd strangely alter the case; but people of rank and power, nuncle, are wiser, and nick-name one another's infirmities. ——— Therefore 'tis your little cheat, you see, that's sent to *Newgate*; your great one only turn'd out of his place.

Sir Fr. Nay, 'tis a comfortable world, indeed, for knaves, fool, fops, cowards, and sharpers.

Ld. Geo. Right! Their quality and quantity keep 'em in countenance.

Sir Fr. So that a man may be any one, or all of 'em, and yet appear no monster, in most of the public places about town.

Ld. Wrang. But with submission, Sir *Friendly*, if I meet with a man of figure, that talks agreeably over a glass; what in the name of good-nature have I to do with his morals?

Sir Fr. 'Tis, in my opinion, as dishonest for a man of quality to converse with a well-bred rogue, as 'twere unsafe for a woman of reputation to make a companion of an agreeable strumpet. People's taste and principles are very justly measur'd by their choice of acquaintance: besides, a man of honour owes the discountenance of a villain as a debt to his own dignity. How poor a spirit must it shew in our people of fortune, to let fellows, who deserve hanging every other day in their lives, die at last of sitting up in the best company? But, my lord *Wronglove*, I am afraid I have a pardon to ask; the last time we three were together, did not the old fellow a little overshoot himself? I thought, when we parted, I had been freer in my advice than became me.

Ld. Wrong. So far from it, that your very manner of speaking makes your most severe reproofs an obligation.

Sir Fr. Nay, I was only concern'd for what I had said to your lordship: as for this spark, I no more mind his caprice, than I believe he does any thing I can say to him: and yet the knave has something of good-humour in him, that makes me, I can't help sometimes throwing away my words upon him. But give me your hand; in troth, when I was at your years I had my follies too.

Ld. Geo. Ay! Now you come to us, nuncle; and I hope you'll have good-nature enough, not to expect your friends to be wiser than you were.

Sir Fr. Perhaps I don't expect it; but in troth, if they shou'd be wiser ——— for my soul I can't see any harm 'twou'd do 'em: and though I love with all my heart to see spirit in a young fellow, yet a little prudence won't poison him. And if a man that sets out into life, shou'd carry a little general esteem with him, as part of his equipage, he'd make never the worse figure at the end of his journey.

Ld. Geo. We young fellows that ride post never mind what figures we make.

Sir Fr. Come! come! let's not contend for victory.

but truth. ——— I love you both ——— and wou'd have all that know you do so too ——— Don't think, because you pass for men of wit, and modish honour, that that's all you owe to your condition: Fortune has given you titles to set your actions in a fairer light, and Nature understanding, to make 'em not only just, but generous. Troth! it grieves me to think you can abuse such happiness, and have no more ambition, or regard to real honour, than the wretched fine gentlemen in most of our modern Comedies! — Will you forgive me? — Upon my faith, I don't speak thus of you to other people, nor wou'd I now speak so to you, but to prevent other people's speaking thus of you to me.

Ld. Geo. Nuncle, depend upon't I'm always pleas'd to hear you.

Ld. Wrong. I take it kindly.

Sir Fr. Then first to you, Lord George — What can you think the honest part of the world will say of you, when you have seduc'd the innocent inclinations of one of the best wives from perhaps one of the best husbands in the world? — To be plain, I mean my Lady Gentle — You see, my Lord, with all your discretion your design's no secret.

Ld. Geo. Upon my life, nuncle, if I were half the fellow you think me, I shou'd be asham'd to look people in the face.

Sir Fr. Fie! fie! how useless is the force of understanding, when only age can give us virtue?

Ld. Wrong. Come, sir, you see he's incorrigible, you'll have better success with me, I hope; for, to tell you the truth, I have few pleasures that you can call it virtue in me to part with.

Sir Fr. I am glad to hear it, my Lord, — I shall be as favourable as I can; but, since we are in search of truth, must freely tell you, the man that violates himself the sacred honours of his wife's chaste bed (I must be plain, my Lord), ought at least to fear, as she's the frailer sex, the same from her; the injury to her strikes deeper than the head, often to the heart. And

then her provocation is in nature greater; and injured minds think nothing is unjust that's natural. This ought to make a wise man tremble: for, in the point of real honour, there's very little difference between being a cuckold, and deserving to be one. And to come a little closer to your lordship's case, to see so fine a woman as my Lady *Wranglove*, even in her flower of beauty, slighted for the unblown pleasures of a green-sick girl, besides the imprudent part, argues at best a thin and sickly appetite.

Ld. *Wrong*. Sir *Friendly*, I am almost ashamed to answer you.——Your reproach, indeed, has touch'd me;—I mean, for my attempts upon your young kinswoman; but because 'tis not fit you shou'd take my word, after my owning so unfair an action, here's one can bear me witness, that not half an hour before you came in, I had resolv'd never to pursue her more.

Sir *Fr*. My Lord, I came not to reproach you with a wrong to me, but to yourself; had the girl had no relation to me, I still had said the same; not but I now am doubly bound to thank you.

Ld. *Geo*. And now, nuncle, I'll give you a piece of advice: dispose of the child as soon as you can; rather under-match her, than not at all. For, if you'll allow me to know any thing of the mathematicks, before she's five weeks older, she will be totally unqualified for an ape-leader. This you may as positively depend upon, as that she is of the feminine gender.

Sir *Fr*. I am pretty well acquainted with the ripeness of her inclinations, and have provided for 'em; unless some such spark as you (now my Lord has laid 'em down) whips up the cudgels in the mean time.

Ld. *Geo*. Not I, upon honour, depend upon't; her person's quite out of my goût, nor have I any more concern about it, than I have to know who will be the next king of *Poland*, or who is the true original inventor of strops for razors.

Ld. *Wrong*. Sir *Friendly*, I own I have been no stranger in other places to the follies you have charg'd me with; yet I am so far inclin'd to part with them, that

were it possible I could be my own way, and properly, reconcil'd to my wife; I wou'd not wish a thought of happiness beyond it.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I know her temper, and her spirit.

Ld. Wrong. O! human patience can't bear it.

Sir Fr. I warrant you! A wise man will bear a greater weakness from a woman: and, since I find your good-nature is not wholly disobligh'd, I cou'd wish, for both your sakes, I had your lordship's secret leave to talk with her.

Ld. Wrong. Umh! Cou'd not it as well be done without my leave, *Sir Friendly*? I shou'd not care to have her think I made advances——

Sir Fr. Oh!——I am a friend to both, and will betray neither of you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's a gentleman come out of the city, and stays at your house to speak with you.

Sir Fr. I'll wait on him.——My Lord, will you excuse me?

Ld. Wrong. I cou'd rather wish your business wou'd, *Sir Friendly*.

Sir Fr. Upon my word, my Lord, 'tis urgent; this man brings me money: I am discharging myself of my guardianship to Mrs. *Conquest*, and my business is now to pay her in the last sum of her fortune.

Ld. Geo. What's the sum total, nuncle, if a man shou'd happen to set a price upon his liberty?

Sir Fr. Come, come, the liberties you value, my Lord, are not worth keeping: an honest smile from the good-humour of that girl, is worth all the sodden favours of your whole *seraglia*——Will four thousand pounds do any good, my Lord?

Ld. Geo. Look you, *Sir Friendly*, marriage is very honourable and wise, and—and—it—it—it's—it's an extreme fine thing, no doubt; but I am one of those frank-hearted fellows that had rather see my friends

happy that way than myself.—My Lord, your servant—If you are going home, nuncle, I'll carry you, for I have business at your house too.

Ld. Wrong. Who's there? Light out!—Lord *George*, is your new chariot at the door?

Ld. Geo. Yes, and positively the prettiest that ever roll'd in the rear of six horses.

Ld. Wrong. I have a mind to look at it. [*Exeunt.*]



A C T I V.

S C E N E, *Lord Wronglove's House.*

Enter Lady Wronglove and Mrs. Hartshorn.

La. Wrong. **W**AS Sir *Friendly* within?
Mrs. Hartf. Yes, madam, he gives his humble service, and says, he will certainly be at home at eight o'clock, and expect your ladyship's commands.

La. Wrong. Did the fellow give my service to my lady *Gentle* too, and to Mrs. *Conquest*?

Mrs. Hartf. He did not say any thing of it to me, madam.

La. Wrong. What blockhead is it you always find out to neglect my business? Whom did you send?

Mrs. Hartf. *James*, madam.

La. Wrong. Call him in; I find I must always give my orders myself.

Mrs. Hartf. He's gone to the Play to keep your ladyship's places.

La. Wrong. The Play! Sure the people are all out of their senses! Why I shan't go to-day.

Mrs. Hartf. He said, madam, your ladyship order'd him, right or wrong, to keep places every Saturday.

La. Wrong. Pishah!

Mrs. Hartf. I hope your ladyship is not angry with me, madam.

La. Wrong. No! prithee! I don't know what I say.

Mrs. Hartf. Ah! poor lady! [*Aside.*]

La. Wrong. What is the Play to-day?

Mrs. Hartf. The—the—*Husband*, something—the *Careful Husband*, I think, madam.

La. Wrong. The *Careful*! the *Careless Husband*, you mean sure—tho' I never saw it.

Mrs. Hartf. Yes, yes, madam—it's that Play that my Lady *Wear-breeches* hates so, that I saw once, madam—where there's a lady comes in, and catches her husband fast asleep with her own woman, and then takes her handkerchief off her neck, and then goes softly to him.

La. Wrong. And strangles him in his sleep?

Mrs. Hartf. No, madam.

La. Wrong. Oh, strangles the woman?

Mrs. Hartf. No, madam, she only lays it gently over his head, for fear he shou'd catch cold, and so steals out of the room, without so much as offering to wake him.

La. Wrong. Horrid! And what became of the poor-spirited creature?

Mrs. Hartf. Oh! madam, when the gentleman wakes, and finds that his lady has been there without taking any notice of it to him, he grows so sham'd of his wickedness, and so sensible of her virtues, that he afterwards proves the civilest gentleman, and the best husband in the world to her.

La. Wrong. Foh! were I an husband, a wife with such a tame, enduring spirit would make me scorn her, or, at best, but sleep at her groveling virtue—is my Lord within?

Mrs. Hartf. Yes, madam, he's reading in his closet.

La. Wrong. Any thing, the dullest solitude more pleases him than my company—Hoh! [*Sighing.*]

Mrs. Hartf. [*Aside.*] Ah, poor lady! it makes me weep to see her grieve at heart so.

La. Wrong. Go to my Lord, and say I desire to speak with him. [*Exit, Mrs. Hartshorn.*] Oh! for a draught of cold indifference to chill this lukewarm

love that wou'd rebel against my peace, that I may leave without a pang this harden'd wretch, and to the rude riots of his gross desire give him up for ever—— He comes ! Keep down, my swelling heart, and let tame patience speak my wrongs for once ; for wrongs like mine need not the force, nor fire of passion to present them.

Enter Lord Wronglove.

Ld. Wrong. I am told, madam, you desire to speak with me.

La. Wrong. Yes, my Lord ; and which, perhaps, you'll not dislike, to talk with you in temper too, if you're in temper to receive it.

Ld. Wrong. While you're in temper, madam, I shall always think I owe you the respect of keeping mine ; and when you are not, I shall keep it in respect to myself.

La. Wrong. My Lord, I never had occasion to question your knowing what you ought to do ; but you are not bound, you'll say, to make your inclination a slave to your understanding : and therefore 'tis possible you won't want arguments to convince me, that a wife's oblig'd to bear all faults in a husband, that are not in her power to punish.

Ld. Wrong. Proceed.

La. Wrong. Now I must tell you, my Lord, when any one injures me, because 'tis in their power, I shall certainly hate 'em for't, because that's in my power.

Ld. Wrong. I am sorry you think it worth your while to make use of so unprofitable a power.

La. Wrong. I am sorry I have occasion for it.

Ld. Wrong. Umh !—— That's half a question—— but go on.

La. Wrong. And therefore, since I find the more I endeavour to detect you, the more you persist in your resolution to use me ill ; since my honest resentment, and your actions, have made us a mutual grievance to one another, I see no way in nature to make us mutu-

ally just, but by cancelling our obligations. If we agree to part, th' uneasy bond of wife or husband no longer lies in force against us——And since I am contented to remit the breaches you have made of the conditions on your part, I suppose you won't think it inconsistent with your reputation, to allow me part of the fortune I brought you as a separate maintenance.

Ld. *Wrong*. When you and I part, madam, you shall leave none of your fortune behind you: but shou'd I now yield to your proposal, the world might think I own'd the breaches you accuse me of, and then 'twere only parting to indulge your pride: but if the sincere sorrow of your humble heart can find a way to make it as consistent with my reputation, as my private peace, I'll sign to your relief this moment.

La. *Wrong*. Your reputation! No, my Lord, that's your business to secure; I've taken care to let my actions justify my own; if you have been remiss, the fault's not mine to answer——I'm glad, at least, to see you own where 'tis your weakness lies.

Ld. *Wrong*. To bear such insults from a wife is not, perhaps, my least weakness——Nay, I've another too, which I might own with equal blushing: a tame, forgiving pity of your unfortunate temper, that pauses yet to take the advantage of your distraction to undo you.

La. *Wrong*. Horrid! insolent assertion! to do me injury; and call my innocent endeavours at redress, distraction!

Ld. *Wrong*. Innocent! Away! You take the rudest, fiercest, falsest means for reparation, if you had a wrong.

La. *Wrong*. If I had! Insupportable! To be out-fac'd that my own eyes deceive me!

Ld. *Wrong*. Death and confusion! Suppose your wrongs were true——think what they are——speak 'em with a modest tongue, and blush at all this redness of resentment!

La. *Wrong*. Nay now, my Lord, we are past all argument.

Ld. Wrong. 'Tis fit we should be so——the subject ought to be below your thoughts——don't misuse your pride, till I am taught to think you've none. Death! I've known the spirit of a strumpet in the misfortunes of her slighted love shew more than you; who tho' her heart was bleeding with the inward pain, yet to her lover's face took pride and ease to seem concernless at his falshood.

La. Wrong. My Lord, your having a better opinion of such creatures than your wife, is no new thing to me; but I must tell you, I have not deserv'd your vile comparison. Nor shall I ever buy an husband's inclination, by being like the horrid things you doat on.

Ld. Wrong. Come, since you are incorrigible, I'll give your pride the vain relief you ask for——Your temper is at last intolerable, and now 'tis mutual ease to part with you: Yet, to let you see 'tis not in the power of all your follies to provoke me to an injustice, I will not trust your wishes with your own discretion; but if you have a friend, that's not an enemy to me, whose honesty and sense you dare depend on, let him be umpire of the conditions, of what's proper both of us should yield to when we part; and here's my hand, my word, my honour, I'll sign 'em on demand.

La. Wrong. Keep but your word in this, my Lord, and I have henceforth no injuries to reproach you with.

Ld. Wrong. If in the least article I shrink from it, conclude me then the mean, the servile wretch you'd make me.

La. Wrong. I'd make you just, my Lord, if that's my fault, I never shall repent it.

Ld. Wrong. We are now no longer our own judges: madam, name the person you appeal to.

La. Wrong. O! my Lord, you can't be more in haste than I am: Sir *Friendly Moral*: and I think you can have no objection to his integrity——I appeal to him.

Ld. Wrong. The man in the world I wou'd have chose

myself; and if you please, madam, I'll wait upon you to him immediately.

La. Wrong. No, my Lord, I think it won't be unreasonable, if I speak with him alone first.

Ld. Wrong. With all my heart; in half an hour then I'll follow you.

La. Wrong. My Lord, you need not affect this indifference, I have provocations enough without it—I'll go, depend on't.

Ld. Wrong. I thought you had been gone, madam. How now!

[*Passing hastily by her.*]

Enter a Servant, who whispers Lord Wronglove.

Serv. Sir *Friendly Moral* desires to speak with your lordship: he stays in the next room, and begs my lady may not know he's here.

La. Wrong. [*Turning*] What can that whisper mean? But I have done with jealousy.

Ld. Wrong. When your lady's gone out, desire him to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*] In half an hour, as I told you, I'll positively be with you.

La. Wrong. Oh! my Lord, I shan't stay to interrupt your privacies.

[*Exit Lady Wronglove.*]

Ld. Wrong. How unfortunate must this woman's temper be, when even this affectation of indifference is the greatest proof I ever receiv'd of her inclination? — What can this come to? — By Sir *Friendly's* being here, I fancy she has been disclosing her grievance already; and when she has made the very worst of it, I am mistaken, if his temper and understanding won't convince her, that 'tis below the pride and prudence of a wife to take so violent a notice of it — But here he comes —

[*Enter Sir Friendly Moral.*]

Sir *Friendly*, your most humble servant — Come, we are alone, I guess your business — my wife has been talking with you.

Sir *Fr.* No, my Lord; and unless you give me your word to be secret, I dare not tell you my business.

Ld. Wrong. Upon my honour.

Sir Fr. Then, there, my Lord, I just now receiv'd that letter from her.

Ld. Wrong. [*Reads.*]

At last, I find there's no way of being easy in my life but parting for ever with my Lord: And I wou'd willingly do it in such a manner, as might least blame me to the world. Your friendship to both our families will, I am sure, engage you to advise me in the safest method: therefore I beg you'll be at home some time this evening, that I may speak with you; for life, as it is, is insupportable.

I am, sir, &c.

Well, Sir *Friendly*, then I can tell you half your trouble's over; for we have agreed to part already; and both have chosen you umpire of the conditions.

Sir Fr. How, my Lord! Cou'd passion be so far your master too?

Ld. Wrong. Why faith, Sir *Friendly*, patience cou'd endure it no longer——'Twas her own proposal, and she found the way at last to provoke me to take her at her word.

Sir Fr. Her word! Fye! fye! Bêcause she'd lame her reputation to cripple your's, shall you revenge her folly on yourself? Come, come, your understanding ought to have more compassion for the misfortune of a weak woman's temper.

Ld. Wrong. Oh! she's implacable!

Sir Fr. That quality punishes itself, my Lord: and since the provocation's yours, it might sometimes be pardon'd. Do but imagine how it must gall the heart of a woman of spirit, to see the loose coquets of her acquaintance smile at the modish husband's sleeping in a separate bed from her.

Ld. Wrong. Humph! There's something in what you say—I own—Not but you'll laugh at me, should I tell you the true and honest occasion of it.

Sir Fr. Not if it be true and honest, my Lord.

Ld. Wrong. Upon my faith, it was not the least dis-

taste of her person, but her being downright an intolerable bed-fellow.

Sir Fr. How do you mean?

Ld. Wrong. I cou'd never sleep with her——For tho' she loves late hours; yet when she has seen me gape for bed, like a waiter at the Groom-porter's in a morning, she wou'd still reserve to herself the tedious decorum of being first solicited for her company; so that she usually contriv'd to let me be three-quarters asleep, before she wou'd do me the honour to disturb me. Then, besides this, I was seldom less than two nights in four, but in the very middle of my first comfortable nap, I was awakened with the alarm of tingle, tingle, for a quarter of an hour together, that you'd swear she wanted a doctor or a midwife; and by-and-bye down comes Mademoiselle with a single under-petticoat in one hand, and rubbing her eyes with t'other; and then, after about half an hour's weighty arguments on both sides, poor Mademoiselle is guilty of not having pull'd the sheet smooth at her feet, by which unpardonable neglect, her ladyship's little toe had lain at least two hours on the rack of a wrinkle, that had almost put her into a fever——This when I civilly complain'd of, she said she must either be easy in the bed, or go out of it——I told her, that was exactly my case; so I very fairly stepp'd into the next room, where I have ever since slept most profoundly, without so much as once dreaming of her.

Sir Fr. An unfortunate circumstance, truly! But I see a little matter, my Lord, will part people that don't care for company.

Ld. Wrong. But, *Sir Friendly*, (not to trouble you with a long particular of the provocations I had from her temper to run a-roguing at first) suppose I have play'd the fool, is the fault unpardonable? Is a wife's reputation like an husband's, mean, or infamous, because she overlooks the folly?

Sir Fr. No——but did you, my Lord, ever give her any signs of a repentance?

Ld. Wrong. As far as I have thought the nature of

the crime requir'd.——I've often receiv'd her moderate reproaches with a smile, and raillery——given her leave to guess, in hopes her understanding wou'd have smil'd again, and pardon'd it.

Sir Fr. And what effect had that?

Ld. Wrong. O! none in nature! For, sir, her pride has possess'd her with so horrid an idea of the crime, that my making slight on't but the more incenses her: and when once her passion takes the liberty of her tongue to me, I neither spare authority nor ill-nature to provoke or silence her———This generally is our course of conversation; and for aught I see, if we shou'd not agree upon parting, we are in as fair a way of heartily plaguing one another for life, as e'er a comfortable couple in *Europe*.

Sir Fr. My Lord, the thought's too melancholy to jest upon.

Ld. Wrong. Why, faith, I have so far a concern for her, that cou'd any means of an accommodation be found, that were not unfit for an husband to submit to, I shou'd not yet refuse to come into it.

Sir Fr. Spoken like a man, my Lord: how far the fault's in you, I partly see; and when I have made the same enquiry into my Lady's grief, I doubt not then I shall be better able to advise.

Ld. Wrong. You've now an opportunity: for she's gone this very minute to my Lady *Gentle's*, to speak with you.

Sir Fr. 'Twere best to lose no time then, my Lord; I'll take my leave——Nay, no ceremony.

Ld. Wrong. No, I'm going part of your way——upon my word. [Exeunt.]

Enter Lady Gentle, reading a letter, and Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. I hope Sir *William's* well, madam.

La. Gent. Yes, very well, my dear, and desires his *compliments* to your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. Does he say any thing of coming to town?

La. Gent. No, nothing yet.

Mrs. Con. No! Pray, madam, don't you think his good worship begins to be a little fonder of fox-hunting than you cou'd wish he were?

La. Gent. I am always pleas'd while he's diverted; if you saw his letters to me, you wou'd not think I had any reason to complain.

Mrs. Con. Nay, the world owns your ladyship has the perfect secret of making a good husband.

La. Gent. Believe me, child, the matter's not so difficult as people wou'd have it. If you but knew what trifles, in the compliance of a wife's temper, soothe a man to fondness, you'd admire to what childish obstinacy so many women owe their uneasiness.

Enter Miss Notable, crying.

Miss Not. Oh! oh!

La. Gent. How now! What's the matter, my dear?

Miss Not. Oh! oh! Madam! Madam!

Mrs. Con. Bless me! What ails the child?

Miss Not. I have been so abus'd! so affronted!

La. Gent. Abus'd! By whom, my dear?

Miss Not. That monster of men, my Lord George
Brilliant.

Mrs. Con. My Lord George?

Miss Not. Oh! I can't speak for passion!

La. Gent. I'm amaz'd! What has he done, child?

Miss Not. The most provoking, impudent thing that ever was offer'd to a young creature, sure: Oh! oh!

Mrs. Con. [*Aside.*] This must be some strange thing, indeed: for if I don't mistake, her young ladyship thinks herself old enough for most sorts of impudence that a man can offer her.

La. Gent. Has he offer'd any love or rudeness to you?

Miss Not. Oh worse! worse! a thousand times.

Mrs. Con. Worse! What can that be, child?—unless it be, that he has not made love to her? [*Aside.*

Miss Not. Oh! Madam! 'Tis not myself alone, but

your ladyship, and Mrs. *Conquest* too, that are affronted.

Mrs. *Con.* Am I in ? But it's no novelty to me ———
I have so far the better of both of you, I am us'd to his
impudence, and know how to bear it.

La. *Gent.* I am amaz'd ! Pray let's hear, child.

Miss *Not.* Oh ! I could tear his flesh, for having such
a thought of me.

La. *Gent.* What thought, my dear ?

Miss *Not.* Oh ! madam ! cou'd any thing but the
greatest villain upon earth think to make me a procu-
ress ?

La. *Gent.* Child ! you startle me !

Miss *Not.* Or any mortal, but from a most profligate
principle of the most provoking vanity, nourish but the
least living hope against your ladyship's virtue ?

La. *Gent.* How, child !

Miss *Not.* Or any monster, but the most ungrateful,
most audacious of mankind propose too, that I should dis-
cover his odious inclinations to your ladyship, before the
very face of one who innocently loves him : Oh ! I am
past patience !——I think I do it bravely. [*Aside.*

[*Walks in disorder.*

La. *Gent.* I am all confusion !

Mrs. *Con.* [*Aside.*] If this girl's passion is not all an
air and his own contrivance, then will I be bound to en-
dure the success of it.

La. *Gent.* His inclination ! and to me ! and yet pro-
pos'd, that you shou'd discover it before Mrs. *Conquest*
too ! To glory in such insolence ! This seems a contra-
diction.

Miss *Not.* Or else, said he, 'twould never be believ'd ;
for having the idle reputation of liking one, I am oblig'd
that both should know it, that she I really love may see
I'm wholly free from my former passion.

Mrs. *Con.* This lye must be his own, by the extremity
of its impudence. [*Aside.*

La. *Gent.* But when he us'd my name, child, why
were you not shock'd at first ? Why did not you leave him
to tell his idle story to the world ?

Miss *Not.* Oh madam ! that was what betray'd me

into hearing him : for when he first began, he nam'd no names ; that he reserv'd till last, till he had told me all, to clinch the secret with.

La. Gent. But pray, child, how did he begin it ? What was his manner of first attempting you ?

Mrs. Con. Her ladyship grows a little inquisitive, methinks. *[Aside.*

Miss Not. Oh ! with all the subtle softness that ever humble love inspired : — Then of a sudden, rousing from his fear, he gave himself such an animated air of confidence, threw back his wig, and cry'd aloud,

*But why shou'd she asham'd or angry be,
To be belov'd by me.*

Mrs. Con. What do you think of his modesty now, madam ?

La. Gent. I am amaz'd, indeed.

Miss Not. Then he turn'd to me, press'd me by the hand, and, kneeling, begg'd my friendship, and threw into my lap such untold heaps of gold, forc'd upon my finger too a sparkling diamond, I thought must beggar him to purchase — But when I heard him close his impudent story, with offering a letter to give your ladyship, while *Mrs. Conquest* was by — I started up, and told him, Yes, my Lord, I'll do your errand, but without your letter, in another manner than your infamous principles have propos'd it ; my Lady shall know your passion, but know it as I do, to avoid, to loath, and scorn you for such a villainous thought. While I was saying this, I threw his filthy gold upon the floor, his letter into the fire, his diamond out of the window, and left him to gather them up, as he pleas'd, without expecting an answer.

La. Gent. Sure ! 'tis impossible a man should wear a face, that cou'd so stedfastly belie his heart.

Miss Not. So I was resolv'd to tell your ladyship — Besides, I thought it proper *Mrs. Conquest* should know his brutality to her too.

Mrs. Con. Oh ! I am mightily oblig'd to you, my dear, but I knew him before.

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Miss Nat. [*Aside.*] Hah! how affectedly indifferent she vain thing is!

La. Gent. My dear, I'm at a loss how far to doubt, or to believe this folly of him——Pray advise me.

[*To Mrs. Conquest.*

Mrs. Con. If your ladyship would take my opinion, I'd be entirely easy. I'd neither doubt or believe any thing of the matter, till I had it confirm'd from his own behaviour.

Miss Nat. [*Aside.*] I can't bear this——She shan't be so easy——I'll tell her the whole truth of his addressing to me, but I'll humble her.

La. Gent. Now, you know, he was to be here with other company at cards to-night; but if you'll do me the favour to sit with me, I'll keep my chamber, say I'm indispos'd, and see no company at all——What think you?

Mrs. Con. I think it won't be worth that trouble, madam.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the company's come.

La. Gent. Is my Lord George there?

Serv. Yes, madam.

La. Gent. What shall we do now?

Mrs. Con. By all means go and receive him among the rest, as you us'd to do, and take no notice of any thing——I'll wait upon your ladyship in two minutes.

La. Gent. If you don't, I shall certainly betray myself; I'll come and fetch you. [*Exit Lady Gentle.*

Mrs. Con. As you please, madam——I have observ'd a thoughtful smile upon this girl's face, that makes me fancy her secret is but half out yet——if I guess right, I'll e'en pique her little pride till she tells me, for I know the chit does not care for me. [*Aside.*

Miss Nat. Oh! Mrs. *Vanity's* a little upon the humdrum at last, I see; I'll make her sob before I have done

with her.——Mrs. *Conquest*, you seem a little concern'd about this matter : now, if I were you, I'd take no manner of notice of it ; he shou'd not have the pride to think 'twas in his power to give me a moment's uneasiness.

Mrs. *Con.* My dear, you advise me very well ; but, upon my word, I am not uneasy.

Miss *Not.* Pooh ! that's such a jest ! as if you did not love my Lord *George*.

Mrs. *Con.* Did he ever tell you I did ?

Miss *Not.* Tell me !——No ! but—one sees that well enough.

Mrs. *Con.* Why then, if I do love him, child, you may depend upon't, it's only from the assurances I have of his loving me only.

Miss *Not.* But since you see (as the world will too in a little time) how false these assurances are, had not you better seem to leave him, than lie under the scandal of his leaving you ?

Mrs. *Con.* No, child ; I'll still keep up my pretensions, if it be only to hinder other vain creatures from coming into hopes of him : for I know, were I once to own myself disengag'd, then every impertinent coquet in town wou'd be giving airs to him.

Miss *Not.* Was ever any thing so stupidly vain ? [*Aside.*] Lard ! Madam, you have a mighty opinion of your perfections sure, to think it impossible a man can be false to you : some women wou'd ha' been a-top of the house by this time, if they had only heard of their lover's common civility to another.——You are strangely happy, sure, when his owning a passion to your friend, before your face, can't make you uneasy ; Heh ! heh !

Mrs. *Con.* Methinks, child, my want of jealousy, from what you've said, gives you a little uneasiness——I shou'd be loth to think his idle way of raillery had taught you to think of love so soon !

Miss *Not.* So soon ! I suppose, madam, if I had the forwardness of your ladyship's inclination, I might

produce as good proofs of his passion for me, as you can of his constancy to you.

Mrs. Con. So! she's stirr'd—I must have the rest on't. [*Aside.*] His passion to thee, love! that were impossible——Have a passion for any thing so incapable to conceive it!——Why love's a thing you won't be fit to think of these two years.

Miss Not. Not think of it! I'd have you know, madam, there are men in the world that think me as fit for a lover, as your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. So! now it's coming. [*Aside.*

Miss Not. And however unfit you think me, madam, I'd have you, next time any man's idle raillery flatters you into a passion for him, don't let me know it; I say, don't let me know it, for fear my unfitness shou'd deceive your vanity, by taking him from you——Not think of it!——I shall live to see you burst with envy, madam——Do you observe me? Burst! burst!——Not think of it!

Mrs. Con. Nay, now I am convinc'd——This passion, I dare swear, is real—He has certainly said some civil thing, before he was aware.——But for what you said of him just now to my Lady Gentle, my pretty one——

Miss Not. Pretty one!———Pray, madam!———Tho' I'm sorry I can't say the same of your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. I say, all your late sobbing, and pretending to throw gold about the room, and diamonds out of the window, and all that stuff, my honey, I am now confirm'd was all, from first to last, the pretty fiction of thy own little pride and jealousy, only to have ease of giving me pain, from his suppos'd forsaking me.

Miss Not. Ha! ha! ha! I am glad to see your vanity so swell'd, madam; but since I find 'tis your disease, I'll be your friend for once, and work your cure by bursting it. Know then, you have guess'd a truth that has undone you: the part I've acted of his pretended passion to another, was, as you said indeed, a

fiction all, and only play'd to give my pride the diversion of his owning to your face, how little he regard^s you. But know, the fatal face to which you owe your ruin, was not my Lady *Gentle's* (that was my own invention), but mine; not her, nor you, but me, and me alone he loves——These poor unfit features have seduc'd him from you——And now let all the world (that sees how barbarously your vanity, or mine, has mistaken idle raillery for love) judge who's most fit to think of it. [Exit.

Mrs. Con. Now the mystery's unfolded——Oh! this subtle devil! how artfully has he fool'd this forward girl to his assistance?——Well! there's something in the barefac'd excess of his assurance that makes me smile: I'm loth to say he's impudent, but he has an undaunted modesty, that's certain; and for that very one quality, 'twill be worth my while not to trust him even with my Lady *Gentle*——Oh, sir!——

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. So, child, how stand affairs now? Any fresh discovery?

Mrs. Con. Only a trifling confirmation or two, sir, of what we suspected before——Therefore what we do must be done quickly——Have you consider'd what I propos'd, sir?

Sir Fr. In troth 'tis a wild thought, but you have a wild spark to deal with; and, for aught I know, his own snakes may be likeliest to hold him. Only take this general caution with you, that the warmth of your understanding don't carry you into any action, that the discretion of your sex can't answer.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, sir, I know my man, and know myself.

Sir Fr. Then here's your letter writ, and seal'd as you directed.

Mrs. Con. And here comes my lady; 'twill be now a fit occasion to make use of it.

Sir Fr. I'll leave you then.

M 2

Mrs. Con. When I have done with her, sir, I wou'd consult you farther.

Sir Fr. I'll expect you in my chamber.

[*Exit Sir Friendly.*]

Enter Lady Gentle.

La. Gent. Oh, child! I'm glad I have found you.

Mrs. Con. What's the matter, madam?

La. Gent. I think I was never more provok'd in my life.

Mrs. Con. Any thing from my Lord George?

La. Gent. Yes ——— something that makes me shudder at the thought.

Mrs. Con. Bless me!

La. Gent. Something so grossly insolent in the over-respectfulness of his behaviour; such an affected awe when he but speaks to me; something that shews within his heart so vain, so arrogant an hope! it more provokes me than all the awkward follies of a barefac'd impudence: and since I find he secretly presumes upon my knowing his odious secret, 'twill be therefore but equal justice to myself and you, to crush his idle hopes at once; for not to check, is to encourage 'em: and when once a woman's known to be follow'd, let her virtue be never so fam'd, or fortified, the good-natur'd town always concludes the lover successful.

Mrs. Con. You did not seem to understand his behaviour?

La. Gent. I can't tell whether he understood me, or no; but I could not help saying, in a very grave manner, that whatever strait I put myself to, his thousand pounds shou'd certainly be paid him next week.

Mrs. Con. And how did he take it?

La. Gent. Oh! he's not to be put out of countenance, that I see; for he press'd me, with a world of easy civility, not to give myself the least concern, for, if I pleas'd, he wou'd immediately give me a very fair chance to pay him, without ever drawing a line for it.

Mrs. Con. A fair chance! What was it?

La. Gent. Why he offer'd me, indeed, at Picquet such odds, as I am sure he is not able to give me ; for Count *Tailly*, who stood by, thought it so considerable an advantage, that he begg'd he might go my halves, or what part of the money I pleas'd.

Mrs. Con. Well said, Count——This may come to something——She must play with him——for, positively, there's no other way of seeing a quick end of his hopes, or my own.

La. Gent. The extravagance of his offer, I confess, surpriz'd me ; so I only told him I'd consider on't, and came to you for advice.

Mrs. Con. Then certainly, madam, take him at his word ; and since you know his dishonest end, in offering such an advantage, e'en make use on't, and let his very baseness punish itself.

La. Gent. As how ?

Mrs. Con. Look you, the best way to disappoint his hopes, is first to raise 'em——Go to him this minute——Call for cards——and put on all the coquet airs imaginable : smile at his respect, and glance him out of his affected modesty. By this means you will certainly encourage his vanity, not only to the gallantry of letting you win your money again, but, more than probably, of losing his own to you.

La. Gent. I vow you tempt me strangely——I boggle at nothing but those airs you speak of, I shall do it so awkwardly——

Mrs. Con. Pooh ! I warrant you, trust to nature ; it's nothing ; one cannot set one's hair in a glass without 'em——If it were not a sure card, you can't think I'd advise you to play it, for my own sake.

La. Gent. That, indeed, leaves me nothing to say——Well, upon your encouragement, I will venture, and the very moment I get home, the sum I am out to him, I'll throw up my cards, and fairly tell him, I know when 'tis time to give over !

Mrs. Con. Admirable !

La. Gent. Nay, and because I don't think I owe him

the regard of declaring it myself, I'll go down into *Stiff* to-morrow morning, and leave you, if you think fit, to tell him the occasion.

Mrs. Con. No, madam; to let your ladyship see I think every thing is entirely safe under your discretion, as my own, I am resolv'd to go out of town this moment.

La. Gent. What do you mean?

Mrs. Con. I have receiv'd a letter here from my brother Sir *John*, my twin brother, madam, whom I have not seen these nine years; he arrived but last night from *Italy*, to take possession of his estate; he's now at his house in *Essex*, and a little indispos'd after his voyage; he has sent his coach, and begs, if possible, I would be with him to-night.

La. Gent. To night! Impossible! Go as early in the morning, child, as you please.

Mrs. Con. No, dear madam, pardon me, the moon shines, and I had rather defer my sleep, than break it.

La. Gent. Well, my dear, since you won't be persuaded, I wish you a good journey—I shall see you before you go.

Mrs. Con. I have just a moment's business with Sir *Friendly*, and then I'll wait upon your ladyship.

[Exit Lady Gentle.

Well, there she goes—How she will come off I can't tell. The good woman, I dare swear, is truly innocent in her intentions; but good looking after, I fancy, can do her no injury: for *Virtue*, tho' she's of a noble spirit, and a great conqueror, 'tis true; yet, as she's stout, alas! we know she's merciful; and when *fly Humility* and *Nature* kneel hopeless to her unquestioned power, they look so pitiful, speak in such a gentle tone, and sigh their griefs with such submission, that cruel *Virtue* loses all its anger for compassion—Compassion kindles hope, hope arms assurance, and then—tho' *Virtue* may have courage enough to give a stout knock with her heel for somebody to come

in——still, I say, if somebody shou'd come in——
'twou'd be ungrateful in any woman alive not to allow,
that good attendance sometimes may do her virtue
considerable service.—— [Exit.



A C T V.

The SCENE continues.

Enter Lord George, and Miss Notable.

Miss Not. SO, when I found that wou'd not take
down her vanity, I e'en told her the
whole truth of the matter, that it was not my Lady
Gentle, but her humble servant was her rival.

Ld Geo. Well said! What did Mrs. Conquest say
upon that?

Miss Not. She did not say much, but the poor soul's
gone out of town upon't.

Ld. Geo. Out of town at this time of night! What
do you mean?

Miss Not. Just as I say, sir.—Her brother, it seems,
is come from travel; so the fullness of her stomach laid
hold on that occasion, and she pretends she's gone to
meet him.—Now what I expect from you is this; since
I see nothing but demonstration will heartily humble her
ladyship, you shall confess all I told her of your ad-
dressing to me, under your own hand, in a billet to
me, which I'll inclose in a stinging letter from myself
to her, and send it immediately.

Ld. Geo. So, so, I am like to be drawn into a fine
business here: the jest must not go so far neither:
the child has a strange vivacity in her good-nature——

[Aside.

Miss Not. You pause upon't——

Ld. Geo. Well, madam, to let you see I scorn to
profess more than I'll stand to, do you draw up the let-

ter to your mind, I'll copy it, and—and—and—and put the change upon you.

[Aside. Miss Not. Aye, now you say something; I'll about it immediately.

Ld. Geo. Do so; I'll stay here till you have done it.

[Exit Miss Notable.

Who says I am not a provident lover? For now by that time my harvest of Lady Gentle is over, the early inclination I have sown in this girl will be just ripe and ready for the sickle——A true woman's man should breed his mistresses, as an old what-d'ye call-um does young girls in a play-house, one under another, that he may have always something fit for the desire of several persons of quality——But here comes my Lady Gentle——Assurance, stand fast; and don't let the insolent awe of a fine woman's virtue look thee out of countenance!

Enter Lady Gentle.

La. Gent. Come, come, my Lord, where do you run? The cards wait for you.

Ld. Geo. I did not know your ladyship had resolv'd to do me the honour of accepting the match I propos'd you.

La. Gent. Oh, your servant, grave sir—you have a mind to be off on't, I suppose——but, as mere a country girl as you think me, you'll find I am enough in the mode not to refuse a good offer, whether I deserve it or no.

Ld. Geo. Coquet, by all that's lovely. *[Aside.]*—I must confess, madam, I should be glad to see your ladyship a little better reconcil'd to the diversions in fashion.

La. Gent. And if I have any skill in faces, whatever solemn airs you give yourself, nobody is more a private friend to 'em than your lordship.

Ld. Geo. I can't disown a secret tenderness for every thing that ought to move the heart, but reputation shou'd be always sacred: and he that does not take

some tare of his own, can never hope to be much trusted with other people's: for were a woman of condition generously to make that trust, what consequence upon earth cou'd be more terrible to her, than the folly or baseness of her lover's exposing the secret?

La. Gent. Very modish morals, upon my word! So that a prudent regard to her reputation is all the virtue you think a woman has occasion for——Fie! fie! I'll swear, my Lord, I took you for quite another man.

Ld. Geo. I never was deceiv'd in your Ladyship, for I always took you for a woman of the first understanding.

La. Gent. Are not you a wicked creature? How can you have the assurance to think any woman that knows you, will be commonly civil to you?

Ld. Geo. I do think the most impudent thing a man can offer to a woman, is to ask the least favour of her before he has done something to deserve it; and so, if you please, madam, we'll 'en sit down to piquet, and make an end of our argument afterwards.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] How blind is vanity? that this wretch can't see I fool him all this while?——Well, my Lord, for once I won't baulk your gallantry.

Enter Sir Friendly.

Come, *Sir Friendly*, my Lord and I are going to piquet; have you a mind to look on a little?

Sir Fr. Troth, madam, I have often look'd on, and have as often wonder'd to see two very good friends sit fairly down, and in cool blood, agree to wish one another heartily inconvenienc'd in their fortune.

Ld. Geo. Oh fie! nuncle, that's driving the consequence too far.

Sir Fr. Not a jot.——And 'tis amazing, that so many good families shou'd daily encourage a diversion, whose utmost pleasure is founded upon avarice and ill-nature; for those are always the secret principles of deep play.

Re-enter Miss Notable, and winks at Lord George.

Lord Geo. I'll wait upon your ladyship in a moment.

[Exit.

La. Gent. I don't know, play is a diversion that always keeps the spirits awake, methinks, whether one wins or loses.

Sir Fr. I have very little to say against a moderate use of it—but we grow serious—Pray, madam, is my Lady *Wranglove* in the next room?

La. Gent. I left her there; she was enquiring for you.—Here she is.

Enter Lady Wranglove.

Well, madam, what are they doing within?

La. Wrang. There's like to be no bank, I find; they are all broke into ombre and piquet.

La. Gent. Your ladyship is not for play then?

La. Wrang. Not yet, madam; I have a word or two with *Sir Friendly*, and I'll endeavour to wait on your ladyship.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's *Sir John Conquest* just come to town; he enquires for your ladyship, or *Sir Friendly Moral*.

La. Gent. *Sir John*! What a mistake has poor Mrs. *Conquest* made now? She went but an hour ago to meet him.

Sir Fr. Will your ladyship give me leave to wait on him?

La. Gent. If you please to give yourself that trouble, *Sir Friendly*. Pray, desire him to walk in.

[Exit Sir Friendly.

Is my Lord *Wranglove* come, madam?

La. Wrang. He said he would be here; but you must not expect him the more for that.

La. *Gent.* He does not much stand upon forms, indeed; but he's extremely good-humour'd when one has him.

La. *Wrong.* How can people taste good-humour where there's no principle?

La. *Gent.* And what dull company would the strictest principle be without good-humour?

La. *Wrong.* And yet the best temper's but a cheat without 'em.

La. *Gent.* He must be a man indeed that lives without a fault; but there are some, that 'tis always a woman's interest to overlook in a husband: our frowns may govern lovers, but husbands must be smil'd on.

La. *Wrong.* I shou'd despise the man that must be flatter'd to be just.

La. *Gent.* Alas! the price is very little; and let me tell you, madam, the man that's just, is not to be despis'd.

La. *Wrong.* He that lives in a profess'd contempt of obligations, can never be belov'd——'tis better to release 'em; you'll shortly see me easy.

La. *Gent.* I shall ever wish you so.

Enter Sir Friendly, with Mrs. Conquest, in man's habit.

Sir *Fr.* This, sir, is my Lady *Gentle*. [*They salute.*]

La. *Gent.* You are welcome into *England*, sir.

Enter Lord George, who, seeing Mrs. Conquest, whispers Sir Friendly.

Mrs. *Con.* I hope your ladyship will excuse my unreasonable visit; but I rather chose to be troublesome, than slow in the acknowledgments I owe your ladyship for the many favours to my sister.

La. *Gent.* Mrs. *Conquest* and her friends are always welcome to me——My Lady *Wronglove*, pray know Sir *John*!

Sir *Fr.* My Lord *George*, and Sir *John*, will you give me leave to recommend a friendship between you?

Ld. *Geo.* Sir, I shall be proud to embrace it.

Mrs. *Con.* 'Twill be a charity in a man of your Lordship's figure to give a raw young fellow a little countenance at his first arrival.

Ld. *Geo.* Your appearance, Sir, I am confident, will never want a friendship among the men of taste, or the ladies.

Sir *Fr.* This young lady, Sir *John*, is a near relation of mine; and if you have not left your heart abroad, will endanger it here as far as e'er a southern beauty of of 'em all.

Mrs. *Con.* If the lady's good-nature were equal to her beauty, 'twou'd be dispos'd of this minute.

Ld. *Geo.* Faith he's a pretty fellow!

Miss *Not.* A sweet creature! [*Aside.*]

Ld. *Wrong.* He's extremely like his sister!

La. *Gent.* The very image of her!

Mrs. *Con.* We were both made at the same time, ladies: I only wish she had been born to breeches too: for I fancy that wild humour of her's is dismally put to't under the confinement of petticoats.

[*Lady Wronglove goes to Sir Friendly.*]

La. *Gent.* I find, Sir *John*, you are twins in your good-humour, as well as your persons.

Mrs. *Con.* We always took a liberty with one another, madam; tho' I believe the girl may be honest at the bottom.

Ld. *Geo.* Methinks you lose time with the young lady, Sir *John*. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. *Con.* To tell you the truth, my Lord, I find myself a little too sharp set for a formal gallantry; I have had a tedious voyage, and would be glad of a small recommendation to any humble extempore favour.

Ld. *Geo.* Faith I'm a little out of—gentlewomen myself at present: but if your occasions are not very pressing, I'll put you out of a despairing condition—

I'll carry you behind the scenes; and there are ladies of all sorts, coquets, prudes, and virgins (they say), serious and comical, vocal — and instrumental.

Mrs. Con. We shall find a time, my Lord.

Miss Nor. I must have a friendship with him, that's poss. Let me see — ay, that will do it. — What a dear pleasure it is, to be in what company one will to have all the young fellows particular? [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Con. [*To La. Gent.*] I am afraid, madam, we interrupt the diversion of the good company; I heard cards call'd for as we came in.

La. Gent. If you please then, Sir John, we'll step into the next room — my Lady *Wranglove*, we'll expect you.

[*Exeunt all but Lady Wranglove and Sir Fr.*]

La. *Wrang.* I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

Sir Fr. I am sorry, madam, to find the misunderstanding carried to such extremities.

La. *Wrang.* After such usage, 'tis impossible to live with him.

Sir Fr. And have you in your calmer thoughts e'er weigh'd the miserable consequence of parting?

La. *Wrang.* 'Twill shew the world, at least, I am not like the world; but scorn on any terms to endure the man that wrongs me. Since, too, he still persists in his defiance of my resentment, what remedy on earth have I but parting?

Sir Fr. Is there no cure for wounds but bleeding dead? — You'll say he has wrong'd you: — Grant it — That wrong has been severely punish'd in your severe resentment.

Ld. *Wrang.* But still it has not cur'd the wrong.

Sir Fr. 'Then certainly 'twas wrong to use it.

La. *Wrang.* I've been reduc'd to use it: nor cou'd I bear the loose, malicious fleerings of the world without a just resentment upon him.

Sir Fr. Nor wou'd I have you bear it — no; — but disappoint their empty, fashionable malice, close up this unprofitable breach, 'tis still within your power, and fix him yet more firmly yours.

La. *Wrang.* Alas! 'tis now too late! We have agreed

on other terms : he too, at last, is willing we shou'd part.

Sir Fr. Bury that thought ! Come, come, there's yet a gentler cure, cou'd you suppress your temper to go through it : this rash and fruitless struggling with a broken limb gives you but more outrageous pain, inflames the wound, and brings your very life of peace in danger : think what a glorious conquest it wou'd be, even in the face of the censorious and insulting world, to tame this wanderer, whose frail inconstancy has sought a vain and false belief : to lure him home with soft affection, to lull him into blushes, peace, and envied happiness : one word, one tender look secures your triumph : is there no virtue, think you, in remission ? Nothing persuasive in the reproach of patient love ?

La. Wrong. I see to what your friendship wou'd persuade me ; but were it possible my flatter'd hopes cou'd lose the memory of my wrongs for ever——Say I cou'd this moment hush my woman's pride to all the tenderness of soft affection, could sigh, could weep, and yearn for reconciliation ! Where could a wretch, unheeded in her wrongs like me, find shelter ? Where is the friendly bosom wou'd receive me ? How can I hope for comfort from that breast, that now I fear is hardened to my undoing ?

Sir Fr. Cherish that soft'ning thought, and all may yet be well. Oh ! there's a meritable goodness in those tears that cannot fail to conquer. Do not suppose I can be partial to his errors, and not a friend to your complaints. Resentment can but at best revenge, but never redress 'em. Repose 'em with a friend for once, and be assur'd, as of my honesty, I'll make you no dishonourable peace.

La. Wrong. I don't doubt of your sincere endeavours. But who can answer for another's morals ? Think how much more miserable you make me, shou'd he insult upon my patience.

Sir Fr. By that sincerity you trust in, I know him of a softer nature, friendly, generous, and tender ; only

to opposition, obstinately cool; to gentleness, submissive as a lover.

La. Wrong. Do what you will with me.

[*Sits down weeping.*]

Sir Fr. He comes! be comforted! depend upon my friendship.

Enter Lord Wronglove.

My lord, I grieve to see you here on this occasion.

Ld. Wrong. I'm not myself transported at it, *Sir Friendly*—I come—t'obey my summons.

Sir Fr. How easily we pay obedience to our wishes! Was it well done, my lord, to work the weakness of a woman to ask for what you knew was her undoing? A mind, which your unkindness had distemper'd, deserv'd a tenderer care, than reaching it a corrosive for a cordial. Your judgment cou'd not but foresee, the resolution of a love-sick wife must stagger in the shock of separation.

Ld. Wrong. Ha!

[*Lady Wronglove weeping.*]

Sir Fr. Look there; and while these soft'ning tears reproach you, think on the long-watch'd, restless hours, she already has endur'd from your misdoing. Nor cou'd you blame her, if in the torturing pain she thought her only help was cutting off the infected limb: But you! you to hold the horrid knife prepar'd, while your hard heart was conscious of a gentler cure, was cruelty beyond a humane nature.

Ld. Wrong. Mistake me not: I need not these reproaches to be just. I never sought this separation, never wish'd it; and when it can be prov'd unkind in me to accept it, my ruin shou'd as soon be welcome. And tho', perhaps, my negligence of temper may have stood the frowns of love unmov'd, yet I can find no guard within, that can support me against its tears.

[*Goes to Lady Wronglove.*]

Sir Fr. Now, my lord, you are indeed a man.

Ld. Wrong. Welcome or not, I must not see you

thus, madam, without an offer'd hand to raise you.
What is't disturbs you?

La. Wrong. Nothing.

Ld. Wrong. If I can never more deserve that soft reception of a lover, give me at least the honest freedom of a friend's concern, to wish you well, to search your inmost griefs, and share 'em.

La. Wrong. I cannot speak to you.

Sir Fr. My Lord, that tender silence tells you all.

Ld. Wrong. Too much indeed for sense of shame to bear—Now, I shou'd blush ever to have deserv'd these just reproachful tears; but when I think they spring from the dissolving rock of secret love, I triumph in the thought; and in this wild irruption of its joy, my parching heart cou'd drink the cordial dew.

La. Wrong. What means this soft effusion in my breast? An aching tenderness ne'er felt before!

Ld. Wrong. I cannot bear that melting eloquence of eyes. Yet nearer, closer to my heart, and live for ever there.—Thus blending our dissolving souls in dumb unutterable softness.

Sir Fr. Age has not yet so drain'd me, but when I see a tenderness in virtue's eye, my heart will soften, and its springs will flow.

La. Wrong. Pity this new confusion of my woman's heart, that wou'd (but knows not how to) make returns for this endearment; that fears, yet wishes; that burns and blushes, with my sex's shame in yielding.—Can you forgive, my Lord, the late uncurb'd expressions of a disorder'd mind?—But think they were my passion's fault, and pardon 'em.

Ld. Wrong. O never! never let us think we disagreed! since our sick love is heal'd, for ever be its cause forgotten and remov'd.

La. Wrong. But let the kind physician that restor'd us, be for ever in our thanks remember'd. Had not his tender care observ'd the crisis of my distemper'd mind, how rashly had I languish'd out a wretched being!

Ld. Wrong. This was indeed beyond a friend—a father's care.

Sir Fr. My Lord, what I have done, your mutual peace has over-paid: I knew you both had virtue, and was too far concern'd indeed to see 'em lost in passion.

Ld. Wrong. If heaven wou'd mark our bounds of happiness below, or human wisdom were allow'd to chuse from virtue's largest store; in joys, like ours, the need-
less search wou'd end.

Sir Fr. In such soft wives!

La. Wrong.—So kind a husband!

Ld. Wrong.—Such a friend!

Enter Mrs. Conquest, and Miss Notable.

Mrs. Con. I'm all amazement, all rapture, madam! Is't possible so fair, so young a creature, can have so just, so exquisite a sense of love.

Miss Not. Why not? If I have any sense, 'tis natural to have our first views of happiness from love.

Mrs. Con. My little soul, you charm me? You have a mind to pique Lord George, you say?

Miss Not. To a rapidity!—Yet, methinks, not so much upon my own account as yours; for his dishonourable usage, as I told you, of your sister. And to convince you of my friendship—there's his own hand to accuse him of it:—Read it.—Hold! hold!—here's my uncle—put it up.

Mrs. Con. Can't I steal into your room by and bye?

Miss Not. With all my heart.—Then I'll tell you more.

[*Exit Miss Notable.*]

Enter Sir Friendly.

Sr. Fr. So, child! you are making way, I see! What have you got in your hand there?

Mrs. Con. Why, young madam tells me 'tis something under my Lord George's hand, that will convince me of his abusing my sister—me.

Sir Fr. Pray read it.

Mrs. Con. [*Reads.*] *To Mrs. Conquest.*

If you design to make any Stay in the country, 'twill be obliging to return the Lampeen you stole from me, it being the only Copy from the Face of this Globe to the Sky, that is to be had for Malice or Money. I am, dear Madam, with all due Extremity, most invincibly yours,
BRILLIANT.

A very tender epistle truly.

Sir Fr. 'Tis like the rest of him.

Mrs. Con. I'm glad to find, however, he has good-humour enough not to let the little malice of that chit fool him, to affront me; which I find she has been heartily driving at.

Sir Fr. In troth, it shews some sence of honour in him.

Mrs. Con. Depend upon't, sir, he does not want it upon an honourable occasion.

Sir Fr. And 'twon'd be hard, indeed, not to make some allowances for youth.

Mrs. Con. But if I am not even with her young ladyship——

Sir Fr. I'm glad you have so innocent a revenge in your hands; pursue your addresses to her: to make her coquetry a little ridiculous, will do her no harm. Well! how go affairs within? How is my Lady Gentle like to come off with his lordship at play?

Mrs. Con. Just as I expected: I left her in the last game of losing about double the sum she owes him. That fellow, the Count, is certainly his confederate! his going her halves, is only a pretence to look on, and so, by private signs, to tell my lord every card in her hand.

Sir Fr. Not unlikely: What's to be done next?

Mrs. Con. Only, sir, do you engage the company in the next room, while I take my post. Hark! they have done play——I heard the table move: away.

Sir Fr. Success to you—— [*Exeunt severally.*]

The SCENE opening, discovers Lord George and Lady Gentle rising from Play.

Ld. Geo. Have we done, madam.

La. Gent. I have, my Lord, and I think for ever!—
please to tell that. Intolerable fortune!

[Brows down money.]

Ld. Geo. The Count gone!

La. Gent. Oh yes, my Lord! he had not patience,
you see—He ran away when the game was scarce up.

Ld. Geo. This bill is his then.

La. Gent. It was; but its yours now, I suppose.

Ld. Geo. Here's forty pounds, madam.

La. Gent. There's a hundred and sixty. *[Gives a bill.]*
What do I owe you now, my Lord?

Ld. Geo. Forty!—a hundred and sixty!—um—
just one thousand pounds, madam.

La. Gent. Very well!—and a thousand pounds
more borrow'd this morning! and all fool'd away!—
fool'd!—fool'd away!

[Fretting.]

Ld. Geo. Oh! does it bite?

[Aside.]

La. Gent. O wretch! wretch! miserable, forsaken
wretch!—Ay! do! think! think! and sigh upon the
consequence of what thou'st done! the ruin! ruin! the
sure ruin that's before thee!

Ld. Geo. Suppose, madam, you try your fortune at
some other game?

La. Gent. Talk not of play—for I have done with
it for ever.

Ld. Geo. I can't see you under this confusion at your
ill-fortune, madam, without offering all within my
power to make you easy.

La. Gent. My Lord, I can't be easy under an obliga-
tion, which I have no prospect of returning.

Ld. Geo. Come, come! you're not so poor as your
hard fears wou'd make you. There are a thousand
trifles in your power to grant, that you wou'd never
miss; yet a heart less sensible of your concern than

mine, wou'd prize beyond a ten-fold value of your losses.

La. Gent. I'm poor in every thing but folly, and a just will to answer for its miscarriages. On this, my Lord, you may depend : I'll strain my utmost to be just to you.

Ld. Geo. Alas ! you do not know the plenty nature has endow'd you with. There's not a tender sigh that heaves that lovely bosom, but might, if given in soft compassion to a lover's pain, release you of the *Indies*, had you lost 'em. Can you suppose, that sordid avarice alone has push'd my fortune to this height ? Was the poor lucre of a little pelf, worth all this wild extravagance of hazard I have run ?——Give me at least a view more generous, tho' less successful ; and think, that all I've done was, in your greatest need, to prove myself your firmest friend.

La. Gent. My Lord, 'twou'd now be affectation not to understand you. But I'm concern'd, that you shou'd think, that Fortune ever cou'd reduce me to stand the hearing of a dishonourable thought from any man ; or, if I cou'd be won to folly, at least I wou'd make a gift, and not a bargain of my heart : therefore, if the worst must be, I'll own the sum, and Sir *William* shall pay it on demand.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Shall he ? I know what will become of your Ladyship—You may flounce, and run away with my line, if you please ; but you will find at the end of it a lovely bearded hook, that will strangely persuade you to come back again——A debt of two thousand pounds is not so easily slip't out of.

La. Gent. Now, my Lord, if, after all I've said, you have honour enough to do a handsome thing, and not let him know of it.

Ld. Geo. Oh ! do you feel it madam ? [*Aside.*]

La. Gent. 'Tis but being a better housewife in pins ; and if a hundred pounds a quarter of that will satisfy you, till the whole's paid, you may depend upon't : a little more prudence, and a winter or two in the country, will soon recover it.

Ld. Geo. Press me not with so unkind a thought. To drive you from the town, ere you have scarce run through half the diversions of it, wou'd be barbarous indeed.

La. Gent. Wou'd I had never seen it!

Ld. Geo. Since I see, madam, how much you dread an obligation to me, say, I cou'd find the means to free you of this debt, without my obliging you; nay, without a possibility of your losing more: I wou'd even, unthank'd relieve you.

La. Gent. That's a proposal I can't comprehend, my Lord.

Ld. Geo. I'll make it more engaging yet: for give but a promise you'll weigh the offer in one moment's thought before you answer to it; and in return, by all my heart's last bleeding hopes, I swear, that even your refusal then shall silence my offensive love, and seal its lips for ever.

La. Gent. I think, my Lord, on that condition, I may hear you.

Ld. Geo. Thus then I offer—I'll tally to you on one single card; which if your fortune wins, the sums you owe me then shall all be quit, and my offensive hopes of love be dumb for ever: If I win, those sums shall still be paid you back, with this reserve, that I have then your silent leave to hope.

La. Gent. My Lord——

Ld. Geo. I beg you do not answer yet——Consider, first, this offer shuts out my very humblest hope from merit, is certain to recover all you've lost, with equal chance, to rid you of (I fear) a hateful lover; and but at worst, makes it your avoidless fortune to endure him.

La. Gent. A bold and artful bait indeed! *Aside.*

Ld. Geo. I've done; and leave you to the moment's pause you promis'd.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] A certainty to quit the sums I owe! A chance with it, to rid me of his assaulting love! A blest deliverance indeed! But then the lot is equal too, of being oblig'd to give him hope, my

secret, conscious leave to love——That thought imbitters all again : 'tis horrid, loathsome, and my disease less formidable than such a cure. Why do I hold it in a moment's thought? Be bold, and tell him so; for while I pause, he hopes in spite of me.—Hold—

Ld Geo. Ay! think a little better on't. [*Aside.*]

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] To do it rashly, may incense him to my ruin: he has it in his power. He may demand my losses of my husband's honour; who, tho' 'twill make his fortune bleed to do't, I'm sure will pay 'em. Two thousand pounds, with what I've lately lost, might shock the measure of a larger income. What face must I appear with then, whose shameful conduct is the cause on't?——The consequence of that must, like an inward canker, feed upon our future quiet! His former, friendly confidence must wear a face of strangeness to me: His ease of thought, his chearful smiles, with all the thousand hoarded pleasures of his indulgent love, are lost: then lost for ever! Insupportable dilemma! What will become of me?

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Ah! poor lady! it's a hard tug indeed; but by the grace of necessity, virtue may get over it.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] If some women had this offer now, they'd make a trifle of the hazard! Nay, even of their losing it.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Well said! take courage!——There's nothing in it——it's a good round sum——half ready money too——think of that——Suppose I shou'd touch the cards a little.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] Hope! he hopes already from his offer: but then he offers me the means to kill it too! Say he shou'd win, he takes that hope but from his fortune, not my virtue! Beside——am I so sure to lose? Is't in his fate that he must ever win? Why shan't I rather think, that Providence has brought me to this stress, only to set follies dreadful in my view, and reaches now, at last, its hand to save and warn me on the precipice?——It must——it is——my flattering hope will have it so——Impossible so critical a

chance can lose—My fancy strengthens on the thought, my heart grows bold, and bids me venture.

Ld. *Geo.* Shall I deal, madam?—or—

La. *Gent.* Quick, quickly then, and take me while my courage can support it. [*He shuffles the cards*] Forgive me, Virtue, if I this once depend on fortune to relieve thee.

Ld. *Geo.* Then fortune for the bold—I've dealt—'Tis fix'd for one of us.

La. *Gent.* There. [*She sets upon the king.*

Ld. *Geo.* The king!—'tis mine.

[*Lord George tallies, and Lady Gentle loses.*

La. *Gent.* Distraction!—madness—madness only can relieve me now!

Ld. *Geo.* Soh! my venture is arriv'd at last——— Now to unlade it. These bills, madam, now are yours again. [*Lays 'em down.*] But why this hard, unkind concern? Be just at least, and don't, in these reluctant tears, drown all the humble hopes that fortune has bequeath'd me: or if they press too rude and sudden for their welcome, chide 'em but gently; they are soft as infant-wishes, one tender word will hush them into whispers.

La. *Gent.* Thus with low submission, on my knees, I beg for pity of my fortune! Oh save me! save me from your cruel power: Pity the hard distresses of a trembling wretch, whom folly has betray'd to ruin! Oh! think not I can ever stain my virtue, and preserve my senses! For while I think, my shrinking heart will shudder at the horror: this trembling hand will wither in your touch, or end me in distraction. If you've a humane soul, oh yet be greatly good, and save me from eternal ruin!

Ld. *Geo.* These bug-bear terrors, (Pray be rais'd——

La. *Gent.* Oh never!)

Ld. *Geo.* Which inexperience forms, wou'd vanish in a moment's just or generous thought: And since the right of fortune has decreed me hope, your word, your faith, your honour stands engag'd to pay it——

Enter a Stranger, bluntly, with a Letter.

Strang. Lady.

La. Gent. Ah!

Ld. Geo. How now! what's the meaning of this?

Strang. I have sworn to deliver this into your hands, tho' I shou'd find you at your prayers.

La. Gent. Who are you, Sir?

Strang. Nobody.

La. Gent. Whence come you?

Strang. From nobody.—Good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

Ld. Geo. Fire and furies! what a ridiculous interruption is this?

La. Gent. I'm amaz'd.

Ld. Geo. What can it mean?

La. Gent. Ha! what's here? Bank bills of two thousand pounds! The very sums I've lost!—No advice! Not a line with 'em! No matter whence they came! From no enemy, I'm sure; better owe 'em any where, than here.

Ld. Geo. I fancy, Madam, the next room were—were—

La. Gent. No, my Lord—our accounts now need no privacy—there's your two thousand pounds.

Ld. Geo. What mean you, Madam.

La. Gent. To be as you wou'd have me, just, and pay my debts of honour: for those that you demand against my honour, by the known laws of play are void: where honour cannot win, honour can never lose. And now, my Lord, 'tis time to leave my folly, and its danger—Fare you well.

Ld. Geo. Hold, madam, our short account is not made even yet: yet your tears indeed might fool me into pity, but this unfair defiance never can: Since you wou'd poorly falsify your word, you've nothing but your sex to guard you now; and all the favour that you now can hope is, that I'll give your virtue even its last excuse, and force you to be just.

La. Gent. Ah!

Enter Mrs. Conquest with her sword drawn.

Mrs. Con. Hold, sir! Unhand the lady.

Ld. Geo. Death! again!

[*Draws.*]

Mrs. Con. My Lord, this is no place to use our swords in; this lady's presence may sheath 'em here without dishonour. Your pardon, madam, for this rude intrusion, which your protection, and my own injur'd honour have compell'd me to.

Ld. Geo. Let me advise you, sir, to have more regard to this lady's honour, than to suppose my being innocently here at cards, was upon the least ill thought against it.

Mrs. Con. My Lord, that's answer'd, in owning I have over-heard every word you have said this half hour.

Ld. Geo. The devil! he loves her sure! You are to be found, sir ———

Mrs. Con. Oh! my Lord, I shall not part with you; but I have first a message to you from my sister, which you must answer instantly: not but I know her pride contemns the baseness you have us'd her with; for which she'd think, perhaps, your disappointment here an over-paid revenge: but there's a jealous honour in our family, whose injuries are above the feeble spirit of a girl to punish; that lies on me to vindicate, and calls for warmer reparation. ——— Follow me.

La. Gent. Good sir! ——— My Lord, I beg for pity's sake, compose this breach some milder way ——— If blood shou'd follow on your going hence, what must the world report of me? my fame's undone for ever. ——— Let me intreat you, sir, be pacify'd; My Lord will think of honourable means to right your sister ——— My Lord, for mercy's sake ———

Ld. Geo. Your pardon, madam, honour must be free before it can repair: compulsion stains it into cowardice ——— Away, sir ——— I follow you.

[*Exeunt Lord George and Mrs. Conquest.*]

La. Gent. Oh miserable wretch! To what a sure destruction has thy folly brought thee!

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. Dear madam, what's the matter? I heard high words within; no harm, I hope?

La. Gent. Murder, I fear, if not prevented; my Lord George and Sir John Conquest have quarrell'd, and are gone out this moment in their heat to end it.

Sir Fr. How!

La. Gent. I beg you, sir, go after 'em; shou'd there be mischief, the world will certainly report, from false appearances, that I'm the cause.

Sir Fr. Don't think so, madam; I'll use my best endeavour to prevent it; in the mean time, take heed your disorder don't alarm the company within.—— Which way went they?

La. Gent. That door, Sir. [*Exit Sir Friendly.*] Who's there? [*Enter a Servant.*] Run quick, and see if the garden-door in the Park be lock'd—— [*Exit Servant.*] How strict a guard shou'd virtue keep upon its innocence! How dangerous, how faithless are its lawful pleasures, when habitual! This vice of play, that has, I fear, undone me, appear'd at first a harmless safe amusement; but, stealing into habit, its greatest hazards grew so familiar, that even the face of ruin lost its terror to me. Oh reflection! how I shudder at thee! The shameful memory of what I have done this night will live with me for ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the garden-door was wide open.

La. Gent. Did you hear no noise or bustle in the Park?

Serv. No, madam.

[*Exit Servant.*]

La. Gent. They're certainly gone out that way, and Sir Friendly must miss of 'em——Oh wretch! wretch! that stood't the foremost in the rank of prudent, happy wives, art now become the branded mark of infamy and shame.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE *changes to the Park.*

Enter Lord George,

Ld. Geo. So, I think we've lost the fellows that ob-
serv'd us; and if my gentleman's stomach holds, now
I'm at leisure to entertain him. Death! Was ever glo-
rious hope so inveterately disappointed? To bring her to
the last stake; to have her fast upon my hook, nay, in
my hand; and, after all, to have her whip through my
fingers like an eel, was the very impudence of Fortune.
——What! not come yet! He has not thought better
on't, I hope——It's a lovely clear moon——I wish it
does not shine through somebody presently.

Enter four Fellows at a distance.

1st Fel. Stand close; softly, and we have him——
By your leave, sir. *[They seize him.]*

Ld. Geo. So! here's like to be no sport to-night,
then——I'm taken care of, I see——Nay, pray, gen-
tlemen, you need not be so boisterous——I am sensible
we are prevented.

2d Fel. Damn your sense, sir. *[Trips up his heels.]*

1st Fel. Blood, sir, make the least noise, I'll stick you
to the ground.

Ld. Geo. I beg your pardon, gentlemen; I find I am
mistaken; I thought you had only come to preserve my
person, but I find 'tis my purse you have a passion for
——You're in the wrong pocket, upon my faith, sir.

1st Fel. Pull off his breeches, make sure work; over
his heels with 'em, that's the shortest way.

Ld. Geo. With submission, sir, there's a shorter——
and if you pull off my skin, you won't find another six-
pence in the inside on't.

2d Fel. What's this?

Ld. Geo. Only a table-book; you don't deal in paper,
I presume?

1st Fel. Rot your paper, sir, we'll trust no man!
Money down's our business.

Enter Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. How now, gentlemen, what are you doing here?

Ld. Geo. Only borrowing a little money, sir; the gentlemen will be gone presently.

1st Fel. Hark you, you bastardly beau, get about your business—or—lay hold on him, *Jack*—

Mrs. Con. Me! Rascal——Look you, dogs——release that gentleman quick——Give him his sword again this minute—or—— [*Presents a pistol.*]

Ld. Geo. And my money, I beseech you, sir.

1st Fel. Blood! Stand him, *Jack*. Five to one he don't kill. The dog has a good coat on, and may have money in his pocket.

2d Fel. Drop your pistol, sir, or, spill my blood! I'll stick you.

Mrs. Con. Do you brave me, villains?—Have at you. [*She presents, and misses fire.*]

1st Fel. Oh ho! Mr. Bully, have we met with you?
——Come on, sir——there, sir, that will do, I believe. [*Two of them secure Lord George.*]

3d Fel. What, is he down? Strip him.

2d Fel. No, rot him, he's not worth it——let's brush off. [*They push, she falls.*]
[*Exit.*]

Ld. Geo. Barbarous dogs! How is it, Sir?

Mrs. Con. I'm kill'd——I fear the wound's quite through me.

Ld. Geo. Mercy forbid! Where is't?

Mrs. Con. Oh! don't touch me—I beg you call for help, or any one to witness that my last words confess you guiltless of this accident.

Ld. Geo. This generous reproach has more than vanquish'd me——I think I see a chair in the Mall——Chair! chair!——They come——Believe me, sir, I have so just a sense of your misfortune, and your honour, that my full heart now bleeds with shame to
i nk how grossly I have wrong'd you in your sister's

goodness: but if you live, the future study of my life shall be with utmost reparation to deserve your friendship.

Enter Chairmen.

Chair. Here: Who calls chair?

Ld. Geo. Here, friend, help up this gentleman, he's wounded by some foot-pads, that just now set upon us
——Softly—— Carry him to Sir *William Gentle's* in
——in——

Chair. I know it very well, Sir.

[*Exeunt Chairmen with Mrs. Conquest.*]

Ld. Geo. Make haste, while I run for a surgeon. Death! how this misfortune shocks and alters me!

The SCENE changes to Lady Gentle's.

Enter Miss Notable. [Alone.]

Miss Not. — So, my plot takes, I find the family's in a terrible confusion: Sir *John* has certainly call'd him to an account for the letter I gave him——If the town does not allow me the reputation of this quarrel——I have very hard fortune.——Lord! what a mortified creature will poor *Mrs. Conquest* be when she hears, in the lonesome country, that her own brother has fought with her only lover for his offers of love to me? Dear soul! what must it think, when such a raw unfit thing as I, gives such a great creature as she so unexpected a confusion? She can't take it ill sure, if one should smile when one sees her next!

Enter to her Mrs. Hartshorn crying.

Mrs. Hartf. Oh, dear madam! sad news.

Miss Not. What's the matter?

Mrs. Hartf. My Lord *George* has kill'd Sir *John Conquest*.

Miss Not. Oh heavens! Upon what account! Art sure he's kill'd? Didst see him dead?

Mrs. Hartf. No, madam, he's alive yet: they've just brought him in a hackney chair; but they say the wound's quite through his body: Oh! 'tis a ghastly sight——

Miss Not. Malicious fortune! Had it been t'other's fate, I cou'd have borne it. To take from me the only life I ever really lov'd, is insupportable.

Mrs. Hartf. Won't your ladyship go in and see him, madam?

Miss Not. Prithce leave me to my griefs alone.

Mrs. Hartf. Ah! poor gentleman—— [Exit.

Miss Not. Pretty creature! I must see him——but it shall be in an undress——it will be proper, at least, to give my concern the advantage of as much disorder as I can. [Exit.

The SCENE drawing, discovers Mrs. Conquest in an Arm'd-Chair, with Lady Gentle, Lord Wronglove, Lady Wronglove, and Servants about her.

Mrs. Con. No surgeon yet?

Ld. Wrong. Here's my Lord George, and I believe the surgeon with him.

Enter Lord George, Sir Friendly, and Surgeon.

Ld. Geo. Come, sir, pray be quick, there's your patient. How is it, sir?

Mrs. Con. Oh!

Sir Fr. 'Twas not in my fortune, madam, to prevent this accident. [To Lady Gentle.

Sur. By your leave, sir——Your coat must come off, Sir.

Mrs. Con. Hold!——Hark you, Sir.

[Whispers the Surgeon.

Sur. I am surpriz'd indeed——A woman! but don't be uneasy, madam, I shall have all due regard to your sex.

Omnes. A woman!

Ld. Geo. Ha!

Mrs. Con. To raise your wonder, ladies, equal to your pity, know then, I am not what I seem, the injur'd brother of Mrs. Conquest; but she, herself, the feeble champion of my own despair.

Ld. Geo. Distraction!

La. Gent. Oh my fatal folly! what ruin art thou now the cause of?

La. Wrong. Poor unhappy creature!

Ld. Wrong. What have you done, my Lord?

Ld. Geo. Oh blind besotted sense! Not by a thousand pointing circumstances to fore-know this secret, and prevent its consequence! How shall I look on her?

Sur. No hopes, indeed, Sir.

Sir. Fr. Take heed — Art sure 'tis mortal?

Sur. Sir, 'tis impossible she can live three hours: — The best way will be to convey the Lady to bed, and let her take a large dose of opium: all the helps I can give her, is the hopes of her going off in her sleep.

La. Gent. [Weeping.] Oh piteous creature!

Ld. Wrong. A heart so generous, indeed, deserv'd a kinder fate.

Ld. Geo. [Throwing himself at Mrs. Conquest's feet.] Oh pardon, injur'd goodness! pardon the ungrateful follies of a thoughtless wretch, that burns to be forgiven! Could I have e'er suppos'd your generous soul had set at half this fatal price my tenderest vows, how gladly lavish had I paid 'em to deserve such virtue!

Mrs. Con. My death, my Lord, is not half so terrible, as the wide wound this rash attempt must give my bleeding reputation.

Ld. Geo. — To cure that virgin fear, this moment I conjure you, then, before your latest breath forsakes you, let the pronouncing priest, in sacred union of our hands, unite our honour too, and in this full reduction of my vanquish'd heart silence all envious questions on your fame for ever.

Mrs. Con. 'Twou'd be, I own, an ease in death, to give me the excuse of dying honourably yours.

Ld. Geo. My Lord, your chaplain's near; I beg he may be sent for.

Ld. *Wrong*. This minute ———

La. *Wrong*. An honourable, tho' unfortunate amends.

Mrs. Con. We have seen happier hours, my Lord; but little thought our many chearful evenings wou'd have so dark a night to end 'em.

La. *Gent*. Mournful indeed!

Ld. Geo. How gladly wou'd I pay down future life to purchase back one past, one fatal hour!

Mrs. Con. Is't possible!

Ld. Geo. What!

Mrs. Con. The world shou'd judge, my Lord, so widely of your heart, that only what was grossly sensual cou'd affect it: — Now, Sir, [*To Sir Friendly.*] what think you? With all this headstrong wildness of a youthful heat, one moment's thought, you see, produces love, compassion, tenderness and honour: and now, my Lord, to let you see 'twas not my interest, but innocent revenge, that made me thus turn champion to my sex's honour; since by this just exposing the weakness of your incontinency, I have reduc'd you fairly to confess the power of honourable love; I thus release you of the chain: for, know, I am as well in health as ever.

[*Walks from the chair.*

Ld. Geo. Ha!

[*Joyfully surpriz'd.*

Mrs. Con. And if the darling pleasures of abandon'd liberty have yet a more prevailing charm, you now again are free; return and revel in the transport.

Ld. Geo. Is there a transport under heav'n like this?

La. *Gent*. Oh blest deliverance!

Ld. *Wrong*. Surprizing change!

La. *Wrong*. No wound nor danger then at last!

Mrs. Con. All! all! in every circumstance I've done this night, my wound, the robbery, the Surgeon, (here's one can witness) all was equally dissembled as my person.

Ld. Geo. Is't possible?

Ld. Wrong. The most consummate bite, my Lord, that ever happen'd in all the circumstances of human nature.

Ld. Geo. Oh! for a strain of thought to out-do this spiteful virtue.

Ld. Wrong. Why, faith, my Lord, 'twas smartly handsome, not to cheat you into marriage, when 'twas so provokingly in her power.

Mrs. Con. If you think it worth your revenge, my Lord——Come! for once I'll give your vanity leave to humble my pride, and laugh in your turn at the notable stir I have made about you.

Ld. Geo. Since you provoke me then, prepare to start, and tremble at my revenge——I will not only marry thee this instant, but the next spiteful moment insolently bed thee too, and make such ravenous havock of thy beauties, that thou shalt call in vain for mercy of my power. Ho! within there! call the chaplain.

Mrs. Con. Hold, my Lord!

Ld. Geo. Nay, no resistance —— by the transporting fury thou hast rais'd, I'll do't.

Mrs. Con. This is down-right violence —— My Lord *Wronglove* —— [Struggling.

La. Wrong. Don't be concern'd, madam, he never does any harm in these fits.

Mrs. Con. Have you no shame?

Ld. Geo. By earth, seas, air, and by the glorious impudence of substantial darkness, I am fix'd!

Mrs. Con. Will no one help me?——Sir *Friendly*!

Sir Fr. Not I, in troth, madam, I think his revenge is a very honest one.

Ld. Geo. Confess me victor, or expect no mercy: Not all the adamantine rocks of virgin coyness, not all your trembling, sighs, prayers, threats, promises, or tears shall save you. Oh transport of devouring joy!

[Closely embracing her.

Mrs. Con. Oh!——Quarter! Quarter! Oh spare my perriwig!

Ld. Wrong. Victoria! Victoria! The town's our own.
Sir Fr. Fairly won indeed, my Lord!

Ld. Geo. Sword in hand, by *Jupiter*!—And now, madam, I put myself into garrison for life.

Mrs. Con. Oh! that won't be long I'm sure; for you've almost kill'd me.

Ld. Geo. I warrant you, moderate exercise will bring you to your wind again.

Mrs. Con. [*Afide.*] Well! people may say what they will; but upon some occasions, an agreeable impudence saves one a world of impertinent confusion.

Ld. Geo. And now, madam, to let you see you have as much subdu'd my follies as my heart—First, let me humbly ask a pardon for offences. Here—
 [*To Lady Gentle*] these sums, madam, I now must own, to serve my shameful ends, were all unfairly won of you; which since I never meant to keep, I thus restore, and with 'em give a friendly warning of your too mix'd a company in play.

La. Gent. My Lord, I thank you—and shall henceforth study to deserve the providence that sav'd me—If I mistake not too, I have some bills that call for restitution. Here, [*To Mrs. Con.*] no one cou'd, I'm sure, be more concern'd to send 'em. Friendships conceal'd are double obligations.

Mrs. Con. I sent 'em to relieve you, madam; but since your danger has no farther need of 'em—

[*Takes the bills.*]

Sir Fr. Now, child, I claim your promise; here comes another of your small accounts that is not made up yet.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, Sir, I'll pay it to a scruple.

Enter Miss Notable weeping, in a Night-dress.

Miss Not. Oh where's this mournful sight! Your pardon, ladies, if my intruding tears confess the weakness of a harmless passion, that now 'twould be ungrateful to conceal: Had I not lov'd too well, this fatal accident had never been.

Mrs. Con. Well! don't be concern'd, dear madam, for the worst part of the accident is, that I am found at last, it seems, to be no more fit for a wife, than as I told you, you were for a husband.

Miss Not. Ha!

[In confusion.

Mrs. Con. Not but I had some thoughts of marrying you too; then I fancy'd you'd soon be uneasy under the cold comforts of petticoats——so——I don't know——the good company has even persuaded me to pull off my breeches, and marry Lord George.

Miss Not. Marry'd! base man! Is this the proof of your indifference to Mrs. Conquest? [Aside to Ld. George.

Ld. Geo. 'Tis not a proof yet indeed——but I believe I shall marry her to-night; and then you know, my life, I am in a fair way to it.

Miss Not. Jeer'd by him too! I'll lock myself up in some dark room, and never see the world again. [Exit.

La. Wrong. [To Ld. Wrong.] Was she, that creature then, the little wicked cause of my disquiet?——How ridiculous have you made my jealousy? Farewel the folly and the pain.

Ld. Wrong. Farewel the cause of it for ever.

La. Gent. [To Sir Fr.] The Count, say you, his accomplice! How I tremble! But I have done with it for life; such ruinous hazards need no second warning.

Ld. Geo. I fancy, nuncle, I begin to make a very ridiculous figure here, and have given myself the air of more looseness than I have been able to come up to.

Mrs. Con. I'm afraid that's giving yourself the air of more virtue than you'll be able to come up to.——But however, since I can't help it, I had as good trust you.

Ld. Geo. And when I wrong that trust, may you deceive me.

Sir Fr. And now a lasting happiness to all.

[Coming forward to the audience.

*Let those that here, as in a mirror, see
Those follies, and the dangers they have run,
Be cheaply warn'd, and think these 'scapes their own.*

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THE TRAGICAL
HISTORY
OF
King RICHARD III.

Alter'd from SHAKESPEARE

By COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

— *Domestica Falsa.*



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

KING *Henry the Sixth,*
Edward, Prince of Wales,
Richard, Duke of York,
Richard, Duke of Gloucester,
Duke of Buckingham,
Henry, Earl of Richmond,
Duke of Norfolk,
Ratcliff,
Catesby,
Tressel,
Oxford,
Lieutenant of the Tower,
Blunt,
Lord Mayor,
Tirrel,
Forest,
Dighton,

Mr. Wilks.
Mr. Norris, Jun.
Mr. Lindar.
Mr. Cibber.
Mr. Mills.
Mr. Ryan.
Mr. Boman, Sen.
Mr. Oates.
Mr. Diggs.
Mr. Will. Wilks.
Mr. Boman, Jun.
Mr. Quin.
Mr. Wright.
Mr. Miller.
Mr. Weller.
Mr. Wilson.
Mr. Higginson.

W O M E N.

Elizabeth, Relict of Edward the
Fourth,
Lady Anne, Relict of Edward,
Prince of Wales,
Duchess of York,

} *Mrs. Porter.*
 } *Mrs. Horton.*
 } *Mrs. Baker.*

Gentlemen, Ladies, Guards, and Attendants.

THE
TRAGICAL HISTORY
OF
King RICHARD III.

ACT I.

SCENE a Garden in the Tower.

Enter Lieutenant and Servant.

Lieut. **H**AS King Henry walk'd forth this morn-
ning?

Serv. No, Sir, but it is near his hour.

Lieut. At any time when you see him here,
Let no stranger into the garden;

I wou'd not have him star'd at——See, who's that

Now ent'ring at the gate? [*Knocking within.*]

Serv. Sir, the Lord Stanley

Lieut. Leave me——

[*Exit Serv.*]

Enter Lord Stanley.

My noble Lord, you're welcome to the Tower;
I heard last night you late arriv'd with news
Of Edward's victory to his joyful queen.

Stanley. Yes, Sir, and I am proud to be the man

That first brought home the last of civil broils ;
 The houses now of *York* and *Lancaster*,
 Like bloody brothers fighting for birth-right,
 No more shall wound the parent that wou'd part 'em :
Edward now sits secure on *England's* throne.

Lieut. Near *Tewksbury*, my Lord, I think they
 fought ;

Has the enemy lost any men of note ?

Stanley, Sir, I was posted home
 Ere an account was taken of the slain ;
 But as I left the field, a proclamation
 From the king was made in search of *Edward*,
 Son to your prisoner, King *Henry* the Sixth,
 Which gave reward to those discover'd him,
 And him his life, if he'd surrender.

Lieut. That brave young prince, I fear's unlike his
 father,

Too high of heart to brook submissive life :
 This will be heavy news to *Henry's* ear,
 For on this battle's cast his all was set.

Stanley. King *Henry* and ill-fortune are familiar ;
 He ever threw with an indifferent hand,
 But never yet was known to lose his patience.
 How does he pass the time in his confinement ?

Lieut. As one whose wishes never reach'd a crown ;
 The king seems dead in him—— but as a man
 He fights sometimes in want of liberty :
 Sometimes he reads, and walks, and wishes
 That fate had blest him with an humbler birth,
 Not to have felt the falling from a throne.

Stanley. Were it not possible to see this king ?
 They say he'll freely talk with *Edward's* friends,
 And even treats them with respect and honour.

Lieut. This is his usual time of walking forth
 (For he's allow'd the freedom of the garden)
 After his morning prayer ; he seldom fails ;
 Behind his arbour we unseen may stand
 A while to observe him.

[*They retire.*]

Enter King Henry in mourning.

K. Henry. By this time the decisive blow is struck;
Either my queen and son are bless'd with victory,
Or I'm the cause no more of civil broils.
Wou'd I were dead, if Heav'n's good will were so,
For what is in this world but grief and care?
What noise and bustle do kings make to find it?
When life's but a short chace, our game content,
Which most pursu'd, is most compell'd to fly;
And he that mounts him on the swiftest hope,
Shall often run his courser to a stand;
While the poor peasant from some distant hill,
Undanger'd and at ease, views all the sport,
And sees content take shelter in his cottage.

Stanley. He seems extremely mov'd.

Lieut. Does he know you?

Stanley. No, nor wou'd I have him.

Lieut. We'll shew ourselves. [*They come forward.*]

K. Henry. Why, there's another check to proud ambition;

That man receiv'd his charge from me, and now
I'm his prisoner——he locks me to my rest.
Such an unlook'd-for change who cou'd suppose,
That saw him kneel to kiss the hand that rais'd him?
But that I shou'd not now complain of,
Since I to that, 'tis possible, may owe
His civil treatment of me.——'Morrow, *Lieutenant*,
Is any news arriv'd?——Who's that with you?

Lieut. A gentleman that came last night express
From *Tewksbury*.——We've had a battle.

K. Henry. Comes he to me with letters, or advice?

Lieut. Sir, he's King *Edward's* officer, your foe.

K. Henry. Then he won't flatter me——You're welcome, sir;

Not less because you are King *Edward's* friend,
For I have almost learn'd myself to be so;
Cou'd I but once forget I was a king,
I might be truly happy, and his subject.

You've gain'd a battle ; is't not so ?

Stanley. We have, sir ; — how, will reach your ear too soon.

K. Henry. If to my loss, it can't too soon — — pray speak,

For fear makes mischief greater than it is.

My queen ! My son ! Say, sir, are they living ?

Stanley. Since my arrival, sir, another post came in, which brought us word your queen and son were prisoners now at *Tewkesbury*.

K. Henry. Heaven's will be done ! The hunters have 'em now,

And I have only sighs and prayers to help 'em.

Stanley. King *Edward*, sir, depends upon his sword, Yet prays heartily, when the battle's won ; And soldiers love a bold and active leader, Fortune, like women, will be close pursu'd : The *English* are high mettled, sir, and 'tis No easy part to fit 'em well — King *Edward* Feels their temper, and 'twill be hard to throw him.

K. Henry. Alas ! I thought 'em men, and rather hop'd

To win their hearts by mildness than severity.

My soul was never form'd for cruelty :

In my eyes justice has seem'd bloody ;

When on the city gates I have beheld

A traitor's quarters parching in the sun,

My blood has turn'd with horror at the sight ;

I took 'em down, and bury'd with his limbs

The memory of the dead man's deeds — perhaps

That pity made me look less terrible,

Giving the mind of weak rebellion spirit ;

For kings are put in trust for all mankind,

And when themselves take injuries, who is safe ?

If so, I have deserv'd these frowns of fortune.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a gentleman brings a warrant For his access to King *Henry's* presence.

Lieut. I come to him.

Stanley. His business may require your privacy;
I'll leave you, sir, wishing you all the good
That can be wish'd——not wronging him I serve.

K. Henry. Farewel ! [*Exeunt.*]
Who can this be ! A sudden coldness,
Like the damp hand of death, has seiz'd my limbs ;
I fear some heavy news !

Enter Lieutenant.

Who is it, good *Lieutenant* ?

Lieut. A gentleman, sir, from *Towshbury*——— he
seems
A melancholy messenger——— for when I ask'd
What news, his answer was a deep-fetch'd sigh :
I wou'd not urge him, but I fear 'tis fatal. [*Exit.*]

Enter Tressel in mourning.

K. Henry. Fatal, indeed ! his brow's the title-page,
That speaks the nature of a tragic volume.
Say, friend, how does my queen ? my son ?
Thou tremblest, and the whiteness of thy cheek
Is apter than thy tongue to tell the errand.
Ev'n such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
So dull, so dead in look, so woe-be-gone,
Drew *Priam's* curtain in the dead of night,
And wou'd have told him half his *Troy* was burn'd ;
But *Priam* found the fire ere he his tongue,
And I my poor son's death ere thou relat'st it.
Now wouldst thou say,——your son did thus and thus,
And thus your queen ; so fought the valiant *Oxford* ;
Stopping my greedy ear with their bold deeds ;
But in the end, (to stop my ear indeed)
Thou hast a sigh, to blow away this praise,
Ending with queen, and son, and all are dead !
Tres. Your queen yet lives, and many of your friends,
But for my lord your son———

K. Henry. Why, he is dead ! — Yet speak, I charge thee !

Tell thou thy master his suspicion lies,
And I will take it as a kind disgrace,
And thank thee well for doing me such wrong.

Tres. Would it were wrong to say ; but, Sir, your fears are true.

K. Henry. Yet for all this, say not my Son is dead.

Tres. Sir, I am sorry I must force you to
Believe, what wou'd to heaven I had not seen :
But in this last battle near *Tewksbury*,
Your son, whose active spirit lent a fire,
Ev'n to the dullest peasant in our camp,
Still made his way where danger stood to oppose him.
A braver youth of more courageous heat,
Ne'er spurr'd his courser at the trumpet's sound.
But who can rule the uncertain chance of war ?
In fine, king *Edward* won the bloody field,
Where both your queen and son were made his prisoners.

K. Henry. Yet hold ! for oh ! this prologue lets me in

To a most-fatal Tragedy to come.

Dy'd he a prisoner, say'st thou ? how ? by grief ?
Or by the bloody hands of those that caught him ?

Tres. After the fight, *Edward* in triumph ask'd
To see the captive prince — the prince was brought,
Whom *Edward* roughly chid for bearing arms ;
Asking what reparation he cou'd make
For having stirr'd his subjects to rebellion ?
Your son, impatient of such taunts, reply'd,
Bow like a subject, proud, ambitious *York*,
While I, now speaking with my father's mouth,
Propose the self-same rebel words to thee,
Which, traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to :
From these more words arose ; till in the end
King *Edward* swell'd with what th' unhappy prince
At such a time too freely spoke, his gauntlet
In his young face with indignation struck ;
At which, crook'd *Richard*, *Clarence*, and the rest,

Bury'd their fatal daggers in his heart.
In bloody state I saw him on the earth,
From whence with life he never more sprung up.

K. Henry. Oh! hadst thou stabb'd, at every word's
deliverance,

Sharp poniards in my flesh while this was told,
Thy wounds had given less anguish than thy words.
Oh! heav'n's, methinks I see my tender lamb
Gasping beneath the ravenous wolves fell gripe!
But say, did all—did they all strike him, say'st thou?

Tref. All, Sir; but the first wound duke Richard
gave.

K. Henry. There let him stop! be that his last of ills!
Oh barbarous act! unhospitable men!
Against the rigid laws of arms to kill him!
Was't not enough his hope of birth right gone,
But must your hate be levell'd at his life?
Nor cou'd his father's wrongs content you?
Nor cou'd a father's grief dissuade the deed?
You have no children——(butchers if you had)
The thought of them wou'd sure have stirr'd remorse.

Tref. Take comfort, Sir, and hope a better day.

K. Henry. Oh! who can hold a fire in his hand,
By thinking on the frosty *Caucasus*?
Or wallow naked in *December's* snow,
By bare remembrance of the summer's heat?
Away——by heaven I shall abhor his sight
Whoever bids me be of comfort more!
If thou wilt soothe my sorrows, then I'll thank thee;
Ay! now thou'rt kind indeed! these tears oblige me.

Tref. Alas! my Lord, I fear more evils towards you.

K. Henry. Why, let it come, I scarce shall feel it
now,

My present woes have beat me to the ground;
And my hard fate can make me fall no lower.
What can it be?——Give it its ugliest shape?——

Oh my poor boy!

Tref. A word does that; it comes in *Glo'ster's* form.

K. Henry. Frightful indeed! Give me the worst that
threatens.

Tref. After the murder of your son, stern *Richard*,
 As if unsated with the wounds he had given,
 With unwash'd hands went from his friends in haste,
 And being ask'd by *Clarence* of the cause,
 He, low'ring, cry'd, Brother, I must to the *Tower*;
 I've business there; excuse me to the king;
 Before you reach the town, expect some news:
 This said, he vanish'd—and I hear's arriv'd.

K. Henry. Why then the period of my woes is set;
 For ills but thought by him, are half perform'd.

Enter Lieutenant, with an order.

Lieut. Forgive me, sir, what I'm compell'd t'obey,
 An order for your close confinement.

K. Henry. Whence comes it, good *Lieutenant*?

Lieut. Sir, from the Duke of *Glo'ster*.

K. Henry. Good-night to all then! I obey it;
 And now, good friend, suppose me on my death-bed,
 And take of me thy last, short living leave.
 Nay, keep thy tears till thou hast seen me dead:
 And when, in tedious winter nights, with good
 Old folks thou sit'st up late
 To hear 'em tell the dismal tales
 Of times long past, ev'n now with woe remember'd,
 Before thou bidd'st good-night, to quiet their grief,
 Tell thou the lamentable fall of me,
 And send thy hearers weeping to their beds. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. Now are our brows bound with victorious
 wreathes;

Our stern alarms are chang'd to merry meetings;
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures:
 Grim-visag'd war has smooth'd his wrinkled front,
 And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds,
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute:

But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks ;
 I, that am curtail'd of man's fair proportion,
 Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely and unfashionable,
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by 'em !
 Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
 Have no delight to pass away my hours,
 Unless to see my shadow in the sun,
 And descant on my own deformity !
 Then since this earth affords no joy to me,
 But to command, to check, and o'erbear such
 As are of happier person than myself ;
 Why then to me this restless world's but hell,
 Till this mishapen trunk's aspiring head
 Be circled in a glorious diadem ! ———
 But then 'tis fix'd on such a height ; oh ! I
 Must stretch the utmost reaching of my soul.
 I'll climb betimes, without remorse or dread,
 And my first step shall be on *Henry's* head.

[*Exit*]

SCENE, a chamber in the Tower.

King Henry sleeping.

Enter Lieutenant.

Lieut. Asleep so soon ! but sorrow minds no seasons ;
 The morning, noon, and night with her's the same,
 She's fond of any hour that yields repose.

K. Henry. Who's there ? *Lieutenant !* Is it you ? Come
 hither.

Lieut. You shake, my lord, and look affrighted.

K. Henry. Oh ! I have had the fearfull'st dream !
 Such sights,

That, as live,

I wou'd not pass another hour so dreadful,

Tho' 'twere to buy a world of happier days.

Reach me a book— I'll try if reading can
Divert these melancholy thoughts.

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. Good day, my Lord; what, at your book so hard?

I disturb you.

K. Henry. You do, indeed.

Glo'st. Friend, leave us to ourselves, we must confer.

K. Henry. What bloody scene has *Roscius* now to act?
[*Exit Lieutenant.*]

Glo'st. Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;
The thief does fear each bush an officer.

K. Henry. Where thieves without controlment rob and kill,

The traveller does fear each bush a thief;
The poor bird that has been already lim'd,
With trembling wings misdoubts of every bush;
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,
Have now the fatal object in my eye
By whom my young one bled, was caught and kill'd.

Glo'st. Why, what a peevish fool was that of *Crete*,
That taught his son the office of a fowl,
And yet for all his wings the fool was drown'd:
Thou shou'dst have taught thy boy his prayers alone,
And then he had not broke his neck with climbing.

K. Henry. Ah! kill me with thy weapon, not thy words;

My breast can better brook thy dagger's point,
Than can my ears that piercing story;
But wherefore dost thou come? Is't for my life?

Glo'st. Think'st thou I am an executioner?

K. Henry. If murdering innocents be executing,
Then thou'rt the worst of executioners.

Glo'st. Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.

K. Henry. Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst
presume,
Thou hadst not liv'd to kill a son of mine:

But thou wert born to massacre mankind.
 How many old mens sighs and widows moans,
 How many orphans water-standing eyes,
 Men for their sons, wives for their husbands fate,
 And children for their parents timelefs death,
 Will rue the hour that ever thou wert born ?
 The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign ;
 The night-crow cry'd, foreboding lucklefs time ;
 Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempests shook down trees :
 The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,
 And chattering pies in dismal discord sung ;
 Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
 And yet brought forth lefs than a mother's hope.
 Teeth hadst thou in thy head, when thou wert born,
 Which plainly said, thou cam'st to bite mankind ;
 And if the rest be true that I have heard,
 Thou cam'st ———

Glo'st. I'll hear no more——die, prophet, in thy
 speech——

For this amongst the rest was I ordain'd. [*Stabs him.*

K. Henry. Oh ! and for much more slaughter after
 this ;

Just Heav'n forgive my sins, and pardon thee. [*Dies.*

Glo'st. What ! will the aspiring blood of *Lancaster*
 Sink in the ground ?——I thought it wou'd have
 mounted.

See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death.

Oh, may such purple tears be always shed

From those that wish the downfal of our house.

If any spark of life be yet remaining,

Down, down, to hell, and say I sent thee thither,

I that have neither pity, love, nor fear ;

Indeed, 'tis true, what *Henry* told me of ;

For I have often heard my mother say,

I came into the world with my legs forward ;

The midwife wonder'd, and the women cry'd,

Good Heaven bless us ! he is born with teeth !

And so I was ; which plainly signified

That I shou'd snarl and bite, and play the dog.

Then since the Heav'ns have shap'd my body so,

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O

Let Hell make crook'd my mind to answer it;
 I have no brother, I am no brother,
 And this word *Love*, which grey beards call divine,
 Be resident in men like one another,
 And not in me—I am—myself alone.
Clarence, beware, thou keep'st me from the light;
 But if I fail not in my deep intent,
 Thou'lt not another day to live; which done,
 Heaven take the weak King *Edward* to his mercy,
 And leave the world for me to baffle in.
 But soft—I'm sharing spoil before the field is won.
Clarence still breathes, *Edward* still lives and reigns,
 When they are gone, then I must count my gains.

[Exit.]



A C T II.

SCENE, *St. Paul's.**Enter Tressel, meeting Lord Stanley.*

Tres. MY Lord, your servant; pray, what brought
 you to *St. Paul's*?

Stanley. I came amongst the crowd to see the corpse
 Of poor King *Henry*; 'tis a dismal sight:
 But yesterday I saw him in the *Tower*;
 His talk is still so fresh within my memory,
 That I could weep to think how Fate has us'd him.
 I wonder where's Duke *Richard's* policy
 In suffering him to lie expos'd to view;
 Can he believe that men will love him for't?

Tres. Oh yes, Sir, love him, as he loves his brothers.

When was you with King *Edward*, pray, my Lord?
 I hear he leaves his food, is melancholy,
 And his physicians fear him mightily.

Stanley. 'Tis thought he'll scarce recover.
Shall we to court, and hear more news of him?

Tref. I am oblig'd to pay attendance here:
The Lady Anne has licence to remove
King Henry's corpse to be interr'd at Chertsey;
And I'm engag'd to follow her.

Stanley. Mean you King Henry's daughter-in-law?

Tref. The same, Sir, widow to the late Prince Edward,
Whom Glo'ster kill'd at Tewksbury.

Stanley. Alas! poor lady, she's severely us'd;
And yet I hear Richard attempts her love:
Methinks, the wrongs he's done her might discourage
him.

Tref. Neither those wrongs, nor his own shape can
fright him:

He sent for leave to visit her this morning,
And she was forc'd to keep her bed to avoid him:
But see, she is arriv'd.—Will you along
To see this doleful ceremony?

Stanley. I'll wait on you.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. 'Twas her excuse to avoid me.—Alas!
She keeps no bed——
She has health enough to progress as far as Chertsey,
Tho' not to bear the sight of me.
I cannot blame her——

Why, Love forswore me in my mother's womb;
And, for I should not deal in his soft laws,
He did corrupt frail Nature with a bribe,
To shrink my arm up like a wither'd shrub,
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size,
To disproportion me in every part.
And am I then a man to be belov'd?
Oh monstrous thought! more vain than my ambition.

Enter Lieutenant hastily.

Lieut. My Lord, I beg your Grace——

Glo'st. Be gone, fellow! I'm not at leisure.

Lieut. My Lord, the King your brother's taken ill.

Glo'st. I'll wait on him; leave me, friend.

Ha! *Edward* taken ill!

'Wou'd he were wasted, marrow, bones and all,
That from his loins no more young brats may rise
To cross me in the golden time I look for.

SCENE *draws, and discovers Lady Anne in Mourning, Lord Stanley, Tressel, Guards, and Bearers, with King Henry's Body.*

'But see! my Love appears——Look where she shines,
Darting pale lustre, like the silver moon,
Thro' her dark veil of rainy sorrow!
So mourn'd the dame of *Ephesus* her love;
And thus the soldier, arm'd with resolution,
Told his soft tale, and was a thriving wooer.
'Tis true, my form perhaps may little move her,
But I've a tongue shall wheedle with the Devil:
Yet hold, she mourns the man that I have kill'd.
First let her sorrows take some vent——stand here,
I'll take her passion in its wain, and turn
This storm of grief to gentle drops of pity
For his repentant murderer. [*He retires.*]

La. Anne. Hung be the heav'n's with black, yield day
to night,

Comets importing change of times and states,
Brandish your fiery tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented to King *Henry's* death.
Oh, be accurst the hand that shed his blood,
Accurst the head that had the heart to do it;
More direful hap betide that hated wretch,

Than I can wish to wolves, to spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives ;
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the life of him,
Than I am now by *Edward's* death and thine.

Glo'st. Poor girl, what pains she takes to curse herself. [*Aside.*]

La. Anne. If ever he have child, abortive be it,
Prodigious and untimely brought to light,
Whose hideous form; whose most unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at her view,
And that be heir to his unhappiness.
Now on to *Chertsey* with your sacred load.

Glo'st. Stay, you that bear the corpse, and set it down.

La. Anne. What black magician conjures up this fiend,

To stop devoted charitable deeds ?

Glo'st. Villains, set down the corpse, or by *St. Paul*,
I'll make a corpse of him that disobey's.

Guard. My Lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

Glo'st. Unmanner'd slave ! stand thou when I command,

Advance thy halbert higher than my breast,
Or, by *St. Paul*, I'll strike thee to my foot,
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

La. Anne. Why dost thou haunt him thus, unfated fiend ?

Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not reach, therefore be gone.

Glo'st. Sweet saint, be not so hard, for charity.

La. Anne. If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,

Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

Why didst thou do this deed ? Cou'd not the laws
Of man, of nature, nor of Heaven dissuade thee ?
No beast so fierce, but knows some touch of pity.

Glo'st. If want of pity be a crime so hateful,
Whence is it thou, fair excellence, art guilty ?

La. Anne. What means the slanderer ?

Glo'st. Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
Of these my crimes suppos'd, to give me leave
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

La. Anne. Then take that sword, whose bloody point
still reeks
With *Henry's* life, with my lov'd Lord's young *Ed-*
ward's,

And here let out thy own, to appease their ghosts.

Glo'st. By such despair, I shou'd accuse myself.

La. Anne. Why, by despairing only canst thou stand
excus'd ;

Didst thou not kill this king ?

Glo'st. I grant ye.

La. Anne. Oh! he was gentle, loving, mild, and
virtuous ;

But he's in heaven, where thou canst never come.

Glo'st. Was I not kind to send him thither then ?
He was much fitter for that place than earth.

La. Anne. And thou unfit for any place but hell.

Glo'st. Yes, one place else——if thou wilt hear me
name it.

La. Anne. Some dungeon.

Glo'st. Your bed-chamber.

La. Anne. Ill rest betide the chamber where thou
lay'st.

Glo'st. So it will, madam, till I lay in yours.

La. Anne. I hope so.

Glo'st. I know so. But, gentle Lady *Anne*,
To leave this keen encounter of our tongues,
And fall to something a more serious method ;
Is not the causer of the untimely deaths
Of these *Plantagenets*, *Henry* and *Edward*,
As blameful as the executioner ?

La. Anne. Thou wert the cause, and most accurs'd
effect.

Glo'st. Your beauty was the cause of that effect ;
Your beauty ! that did haunt me in my sleep,
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in that soft bosom !

La. Anne. If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide.

These hands shou'd rend that beauty from my cheeks.

Glo'st. These eyes cou'd not endure that beauty's wreck,

You shou'd not blemish it, if I stood by:

As all the world is nourish'd by the sun,

So I by that——It is my day! my life!

La. Anne. I wou'd it were, to be reveng'd on thee.

Glo'st. It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To wish revenge on him that loves thee.

La. Anne. Say rather 'tis my duty,
To seek revenge on him that kill'd my husband.

Glo'st. Fair creature, he that kill'd thy husband,
Did it to——help thee to a better husband.

La. Anne. His better does not breathe upon the earth.

Glo'st. He lives that loves thee better than he cou'd.

La. Anne. Name him.

Glo'st. *Plantagenet.*

La. Anne. Why that was he.

Glo'st. The self-same name, but one of fester nature.

La. Anne. Where is he?

Glo'st. Ah! take more pity in thy eyes, and see him
——here.

La. Anne. Wou'd they were basilisks to strike thee dead.

Glo'st. I wou'd they were that I might die at once,
For now they kill me with a living death;
Darting with cruel aim despair and love;
I never su'd to friend or enemy;
My tongue cou'd never learn sweet smoothing words;
But now thy beauty is propos'd my see,
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.

La. Anne. Is there a tongue on earth can speak for thee?

Why dost thou court my hate?

Tres. Where will this end? She frowns upon him yet.

Stanley. But yet she hears him in her frowns—
I fear him.

Glo'st. Oh teach not thy soft lip such cold contempt—

If thy relentless heart cannot forgive,
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword,
Which if thou please to hide in this true breast,
And let the honest soul out that adores thee,
I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,
And humbly beg that death upon my knees.

La. Anne. What shall I say or do? Direct me,
Heav'n!

When stones weep, sure the tears are natural,
And Heaven itself instructs us to forgive,
When they do flow from a sincere repentance.

Glo'st. Nay, do not pause, for I did kill King *Harry*,
But 'twas thy wond'rous beauty did provoke me;
Or, now, dispatch—'twas I that stabb'd young *Edward*,
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on;
And I might still persist (so stubborn is
My temper) to rejoice at what I've done;
But that thy powerful eyes (as roaring seas
Obey the changes of the moon) have turn'd
My heart, and made it flow with penitence.
Take up the sword again, or take up me.

[*She drops the sword.*]

La. Anne. No, tho' I wish thy death,
I will not be thy executioner.

Glo'st. Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

La. Anne. I have already.

Glo'st. That was in thy rage:

Say it again, and even with thy word
This guilty hand, that robb'd thee of thy love,
Shall, for thy love, revenge thee on thy lover.
To both their deaths shalt thou be accessory.

Tref. By Heav'n! she wants the heart to bid him
do't.

Stanley. What think you now, Sir?

Tref. I'm struck! I scarce can credit what I see.

Stanley. Why, you see—a woman.

Fref. When future chronicles shall speak of this,
They will be thought romance, not history.

Glo'st. What not a word to pardon or condemn
me?

But thou art wise—and canst with silence kill me.
Yet ev'n in death my fleeting soul pursues thee;
Dash not the tears of penitence away;
I ask but leave t'indulge my cold despair;
By Heav'n! there's joy in this extravagance
Of woe—'tis melting, soft, 'tis pleasing ruin.
Oh! 'tis too much, too much for life to bear
This aching tenderness of thought.

La. Anne. Wou'dst thou not blame me to forgive thy
crimes?

Glo'st. They're not to be forgiven; no, not even
Penitence can atone 'em—Oh misery
Of thought! that strikes me with at once repentance
And despair—Tho' unpardon'd, yield me pity.

La. Anne. Wou'd I knew thy heart.

Glo'st. 'Tis figur'd in my tongue.

La. Anne. I fear me both are false.

Glo'st. Then never man was true.

La. Anne. Put up thy sword.

Glo'st. Say then, my peace is made.

La. Anne. That thou shalt know hereafter.

Glo'st. But shall I live in hope?

La. Anne. All men, I hope, live so.

Glo'st. I swear, bright saint, I am not what I was.
Those eyes have turn'd my stubborn heart to woman;
Thy goodness makes me soft in penitence,
And my harsh thoughts are turn'd to peace and love.
Oh! if thy poor devoted servant might
But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,
Thou wou'dst confirm his happiness for ever.

La. Anne. What is't?

Glo'st. That it may please thee, leave these sad de-
signs

To him that has most cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to *Crosby* house;

Where after I have solemnly interr'd
 At *Chertsey* monast'ry this injur'd King,
 And wet his grave with my repentant tears,
 I will with all expedient duty see you :
 For divers unknown reasons, I beseech you
 Grant me this favour.

La. Anne. I do, my Lord—and much it joys me too
 To see you are become so penitent.
Tressel and *Berkley*, go along with me.

Glo'st. Bid me farewell.

La. Anne. 'Tis more than you deserve :
 But since you teach me how to flatter you,
 Imagine I have said farewell already.

[*Exit.*

Guard. Toward *Chertsey*, my Lord ?

Glo'st. No, to *White-Fryars*—there attend my coming.
 [*Exeunt Guards with the Body.*

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd ?
 Was ever woman in this humour won ?
 I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
 What ! I that kill'd her husband and her father,
 To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
 The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
 Having Heav'n, her conscience, and these bars against
 me,

And I no friends to back my suit withal,
 But the plain devil, and dissembling looks !
 And yet to win her ! all the world to nothing !
 Can she abase her beauteous eyes on me,
 Whose all not equals *Edward's* moiety ?
 On me, that halt, and am mishapen thus !
 My dukedom to a widow's chastity,
 I do mistake my person all this while :
 Upon my life, she finds, altho' I cannot,
 Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
 I'll have my chambers lin'd with looking-glass ;
 And entertain a score or two of taylor,
 To study fashions to adorn my body :
 Since I am crept in favour with myself,
 I will maintain it with some little cost ;

But first, I'll turn St. *Harry* to his grave;
And then return lamenting to my love.
Shine out, fair sun, till I salute my glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, the Presence.

Enter Buckingham hastily, meeting Lord Stanley.

Buck. Did you see the Duke?

Stanley. What Duke, my Lord?

Buck. His Grace of *Glo'ster*, did you see him?

Stanley. Not lately, my Lord—I hope no ill news!

Buck. The worst that heart e'er bore, or tongue can
utter,

Edward the King, his royal brother's dead!

Stanley. 'Tis sad indeed——I wish by your impa-
tience

To acquaint him tho', you think it so to him: [*Aside.*]

Did the King, my Lord, make any mention

Of a Protector for his crown and children?

Buck. He did——Duke *Richard* has the care of
both.

Stanley. That sad news you are afraid to tell him too.

[*Aside.*]

Buck. He'll spare no toil, I'm sure, to fill his place.

Stanley. Pray Heaven he's not too diligent. [*Aside.*]

My Lord,—is not that the Dutcheſs of *York*,

The King's mother, coming, I fear, to visit him?

Buck. 'Tis she—little thinking what has befall'n us.

Enter Dutcheſs of York.

Dut. of York. Good day, my Lords; how takes the
King his rest?

Buck. Alas! madam, too well—he sleeps for ever.

Dut. of York. Dead! Good Heav'n, support me!

Buck. Madam, 'twas my unhappy lot to hear
His last departing groans, and close his eyes.

Dut. of *York*. Another taken from me too! Why,
just Heav'n,

Am I still left the last in life and woe?
First I bemoan'd a noble husband's death,
Yet liv'd with looking on his images:
But now my last support is gone—first *Clarence*,
Now *Edward* is forever taken from me;—
Both crutches now the unrelenting hand
Of Death has stricken from my feeble arms,
And I must now of force sink down with sorrow.

Buck. Your youngest son, the noble *Richard* lives:
His love, I know, will feel his mother's cares,
And bring new comfort to your latter days.

Dut. of *York*. 'Twere new indeed! for yet of him I've
none,

Unless a churlish disobedience may
Be counted from a child a mother's comfort.
From his malicious grudge, I know my son,
His brother *Clarence*' death was first contriv'd;
But may his penitence find Heav'n's mercy.
Where is the Queen, my Lord?

Buck. I left her with her kinsmen deep in sorrow,
Who have with much ado persuaded her
To leave the body——Madam, they are here.

Enter Queen, Rivers, and Dorset.

Queen. Why do you thus oppose my grief? unless
To make me rave, and weep the faster? Ha!
My mother too in tears! Fresh sorrow strikes
My heart at sight of every friend that lov'd
My *Edward* living——Oh, mother, he's dead!
Oh! that my eyes cou'd weep away my soul,
Then I might follow worthy of his hearse.

Stanley. Your duty, madam, of a wife is dead,
And now the mother's only claims your care.
Think on the Prince your son, —— send for him
straight,

And let his coronation clear your eyes,
Bury your griefs in the dead *Edward*'s grave.

Revive your joys on living Edward's throne.

Queen. Alas! that thought but adds to my afflictions.

New tears for Edward gone, and fears for Edward living;

An helpless child in his minority.

Is in the trust of his stern uncle Glo'ster;

A man that frowns on me, and all of mine.

Buck. Judge not so hardly, madam, of his love;
Your son will find in him a father's care.

Enter Glo'ster behind.

Glo'st. Why, ay! these tears look well—Sorrow's the mode,

And every one at Court must wear it now:

With all my heart; I'll not be out of fashion. [*Aside.*

Queen. My Lord, just Heaven knows, I never hated Glo'ster,

But wou'd on any terms embrace his friendship.

Buck. These words wou'd make him weep—I know him yours:

See where he comes in sorrow for our loss.

Glo'st. My Lords, good-morrow; ——— Cousin of Buckingham,

I am yours.

Buck. Good-morning to your Grace. [*Weeps.*

Glo'st. Methinks

We meet like men that had forgot to speak.

Buck. We may remember—but our argument is now too mournful to admit much talk.

Glo'st. It is, indeed! Peace be with him has made it so.

Sister, take comfort—'tis true, we've all cause

To mourn the dimming of our shining star;

But Sorrow never cou'd revive the dead;

And, if it cou'd, Hope wou'd prevent our tears;

So we must weep because we weep in vain.

Madam, my mother—I do cry you mercy,

My grief was blind—I did not see your Grace:

Most humbly on my knee I crave your blessing.

Duc. of York. Thou hast it, and may thy charitable Hand and tongue love one another; may Heav'n Bellow thy breast with meekness and obedience.

Glo'st. Amen, and make me die a good old man! That's the old but-end of a mother's blessing;

I marvel that her Grace did leave it out. [*Aside.*]

Buck. My Lord, I think 'twere fit, that now Prince Edward

Forthwith from Ludlow thou'd be sent for home,
In order to his coronation.

Glo'st. By all means, my Lords——Come, let's in to council,

And appoint who shall be the messengers:

Madam, and you, my sister, please you go

To give your sentiments on this occasion.

Queen. My Lord, your wisdom needs no help from me;

My glad consent you have in all that's just,

Or for the people's good, tho' I suffer by't.

Glo'st. Please you to retire, madam; we shall propose

What you'd not think the people's wrong, nor yours.

Queen. May Heaven prosper all your good intent!

[*Exit all but Glo'ster and Buck.*]

Glo'st. Amen, with all my heart,——for mine's the crown;

And is not that a good one?——Ha! pray'd she not well, cousin?

Buck. I hope she prophesy'd—you now stand fair.

Glo'st. Now, by St. Paul, I feel it here—Methinks The massy weight on't galls my laden brow:

What think'st thou, cousin, wer't not an easy matter To get Lord Stanley's hand to help it on?

Buck. My Lord, I doubt that, for his father's sake; He loves the Prince too well; he'll scarce be won To any thing against him.

Glo'st. Poverty, the reward of honest fools,
O'erthake him for't——What think'st thou then of Hastings?

Buck. He shall be try'd, my Lord——I'll find out
Catsby.

Who shall at subtle distance sound his thoughts :
But we must still suppose the worst may happen :
What if we find him cold in our design ?

Glo'st. Chop off his head——something we'll soon deal
termine ;

But haste, and find out *Catsby*,
That done, follow me to the Council-chamber ;
We'll not be seen together much, nor have
It known that we confer in private——therefore
Away, good cousin.

Buck. I am gone, my Lord:

[*Exit.*]

Glo'st. Thus far we run before the wind ;
My fortune smiles, and gives me all that I dare ask,
The conquer'd Lady *Anne* is bound in vows ;
Fast as the Priest can make us, we are one.
The King my brother sleeps without his pillow,
And I am left the guardian of his infant-heir.

Let me see——

The Prince will soon be here——Let him! The crown!
Oh yes! he shall have twenty globes and scepters too ;
New ones made to play withal——but no coronation——
No, nor any court-flies about him——no kinsmen.
Hold ye——where shall he keep his court?
Aye, the Tower.

[*Exit.*]

A C T. III. S C E N E. I.

*Enter Prince Edward, Glo'ster, Buckingham, Lord Stanley,
Tressel, and Attendants.*

Glo'st. **N**OW, my royal cousin, welcome to London ;
Welcome to all those honour'd dignities
Which by your father's will, and by your birth,
You stand the undoubted heir possess'd of ;
And, if my plain simplicity of heart,

May take the liberty to shew itself,
 You're farther welcome to your uncle's care
 And love—Why do you sigh, my Lord?
 The weary way has made you melancholy.

P. Ed. No, uncle, but our crosses on the way
 Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy:
 I want more uncles here to welcome me!

Tref. More uncles! What means his Highness?

Stanley. Why, first, the careful Duke of *Gloster* has
 Secur'd his kinsmen on the way—*Lord Rivers*, *Grey*,
Sir Thomas Vaughan, and others of his friends;
 Are prisoners now in *Pomfret* castle;
 On what pretence it boots not—there they are,
 Let the Devil and the Duke alone to accuse 'em.

Glo'st. My Lord, the Mayor of *London* comes to greet
 you.

Enter Lord Mayor and Citizens.

Ld. Mayor. Vouchsafe, most gracious sovereign, to
 accept

The general homage of your loyal city:
 We farther beg your royal leave to speak
 In deep condolment of your father's loss;
 And, as far as our true sorrow would permit,
 To 'gratulate your accession to the throne.

P. Ed. I thank you, good my Lord, and thank you
 all.

Alas, my youth is yet unfit to govern,
 Therefore the sword of justice is in abler hands:
 But be assur'd of this, so much already
 I perceive I love you, that tho' I know not yet
 To do you offices of good; yet this I know,
 I'll sooner die, than basely do you wrong.

Glo'st. So wise, so young, they say do never live long.
[*Aside.*]

P. Ed. My Lords,
 I thought my mother, and my brother *York*,
 Wou'd long ere this have met us on the way;
 Say, uncle *Glo'ster*, if our brother come,

Where shall we sojourn 'till our coronation?

Glo'st. Where it shall seem best to your royal self;
May I advise you, Sir, some day or two
Your Highness shall repose you at the Tower;
Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.

P. Ed. Why at the Tower? But be it as you please.

Back. My Lord——your brother's Grace of York.

Enter Duke and Duchess of York.

P. Ed. Richard of York! how fares our dearest brother?
[*Embracing.*

D. of York. Oh, my dear Lord! so I must call you
now.

P. Ed. Ay, brother, to our grief, as it is yours.
Too soon he dy'd, who might have better worn
That title, which in me will lose its majesty.

Glo'st. How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

D. of York. Thank you kindly, dear uncle——Oh
my Lord,

You said that idle weeds were fast in growth:
The King my brother has out-grown me far.

Glo'st. He has, my Lord.

D. of York. And therefore is he idle?

Glo'st. Oh, pretty cousin, I must not say so.

D. of York. Nay, uncle, I don't believe the saying's
true,

For if it were, you'd be an idle weed.

Glo'st. How so, cousin?

D. of York. Because I have heard folks say you grow
so fast,

Your teeth wou'd gnaw a crust at two hours old:

Now 'twas two years ere I cou'd get a tooth.

Glo'st. Indeed! I find the brat is taught this lesson——
[*Aside.*

Who told thee this, my pretty merry cousin?

D. of York. Why, your nurse, uncle.

Glo'st. My nurse, child! she was dead 'fore thou wert
born.

D. of York. If 'twas not she, I can't tell who told me:

Glo'st. So subtle too—'tis pity thou art short-liv'd.

[*Aside.*]

P. Ed. My brother, uncle, will be cross in talk.

Glo'st. Oh, fear not, my Lord, we shall never quarrel.

P. Ed. I hope your Grace knows how to bear with him —

D. of York. You mean to bear me—not to bear with me—

Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me ;
Because that I am little like an ape,
He thinks you should bear me on your shoulders.

P. Ed. Fye, brother, I have no such meaning.

Stanley. With what a sharp, provided wit he reasons !
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
He prettily and aptly taunts himself.

Trof. So cunning and so young is wonderful ?

Glo'st. My Lord, wilt please you pass along ?
Myself and my good cousin *Buckingham*
Will to your mother, to intreat of her
To meet and bid you welcome at the *Tower*.

D. of York. What ! will you go to the *Tower*, my dear Lord ?

P. Ed. My Lord Protector will have it so.

D. of York. I shan't sleep in quiet in the *Tower*.

Glo'st. I'll warrant you — King *Henry* lay there,
And he sleeps in quiet. [*Aside.*]

P. Ed. What shou'd you fear, brother ?

D. of York. My uncle *Clarence's* ghost, my Lord ;
My grandmother told me he was kill'd there.

P. Ed. I fear no uncles dead.

Glo'st. Nor any, sir, that live, I hope.

P. Ed. I hope so too—but come, my Lords,
To the *Tower*, since it must be so.

[*Exeunt all but Glo'ster and Buckingham.*]

Buck. Think you, my Lord, this little prating *York*
Was not instructed by his subtle mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously ?

Glo'st. No doubt, no doubt; oh 'tis a shrewd young master;

Stubborn, bold, quick, forward and capable!

He is all the mother's from the top to the toe:

But let them rest—Now, what says *Catesby*?

Buck. My Lord, 'tis much as I suspected, and He's here himself to inform you.

Enter Catesby.

Glo'st. So, *Catesby*——hast thou been tampering? What news?

Catesby. My Lord, according to th' instruction given me,

With words at distance dropp'd, I founded *Hastings*,

Piercing how far he did affect your purpose;

To which, indeed, I found him cold, unwilling:

The sum is this——he seem'd a-while to understand me not.

At length, from plainer speaking urg'd to answer,

He said in heat, rather than wrong the head

To whom the crown was due, he'd lose his own.

Glo'st. Indeed! his own then answer for that saying:

He shall be taken care of——mean while, *Catesby*,

Be thou near me——Cousin of *Buckingham*;

Let's lose no time—the Mayor and Citizens

Are now busy meeting in *Guildhall*:

Thither I'd have you haste immediately,

And at your meetest 'vantage of the time,

Improve those hints I gave you late to speak of:

But above all infer the bastardy

Of *Edward's* children;

Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:

Tell 'em, when my mother went with child of him,

My princely father then had wars in *France*;

And, by true computation of the time,

Found; that the issue was not his begot,

Which in his lineaments too plain appear'd,

Being nothing like the noble *York*, my father;

Yet touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off,

Because, my Lord, you know my mother lives.

Buck. Doubt not, my Lord, I'll play the orator,
As if myself might wear the golden fee
For which I plead.

Glo'st. If you thrive well, bring 'em to see me here,
Where you shall find me seriously employ'd
With the most learned Fathers of the Church.

Buck. I fly, my Lord, to serve you.

Glo'st. To serve thyself, my cousin;
For look when I am King, claim thou of me
The Earldom of *Hereford*, and all those moveables
Whereof the King my brother stood possess'd.

Buck. I shall remember that your Grace was bounti-
ful.

Glo'st. Cousin, I have said it.

Buck. I am gone, my Lord.

[*Exit.*

Glo'st. So, I've secur'd my cousin here. These move-
ables

Will never let his brain rest till I am King.

Catesby, go you with speed to Doctor *Shaw*,
And thence, to Friar *Beuker*—bid 'em both
Attend me here, within an hour at farthest;
Mean while my private orders shall be given,

[*Exit Catesby.*

To lock out all admittance to the Princes.

Now, by St. *Paul*, the work goes bravely on!

How many frightful stops wou'd Conscience make

In some soft heads, to undertake like me?

Come, this Conscience is a convenient scare-crow;

It guards the fruit which priests and wise men taste,

Who never set it up to fright themselves;

They know 'tis rags, and gather in the face on't;

While half-starv'd shallow daws thro' fear are honest.

Why were laws made, but that we're rogues by nature?

Conscience! 'tis our coin; we live by parting with it;

And he thrives best that has the most to spare.

The protesting lover buys hope with it,

And the deluded virgin, short-liv'd pleasure;

Old grey-beards cram their avarice with it;

Your lank-jaw'd hungry judge will dine upon't,
And hang the guiltless, rather than eat his mutton
cold;

The crown'd head quits it for despotick sway,
The stubborn people for unaw'd rebellion.
There's not a slave but has his share of villain:
Why then shall after-ages think my deeds
Inhuman! since my worst are but ambition.
Ev'n all mankind to some lov'd ills incline:
Great men choose greater sins, ambition's mine.

[Exit.]

Enter Lady Anne.

La. Anne. When, when shall I have rest? Was marriage made

To be the scourge of our offences here?
Oh! no—'twas meant a blessing to the virtuous;
It once was so to me, tho' now my curse.
The fruit of Edward's love was sweet and pleasing;
But oh! untimely cropt by cruel Glo'ster;
Who rudely having grafted on his stock,
Now makes my life yield only sorrow.
Let me have musick to compose my thoughts.

[Soft music]

It will not be——nought but the grave can close my
eyes.

How many labouring wretches take their rest,
While I, night after night, with cares lid waking!
As if the gentle nurse of nature, sleep,
Had vow'd to rock my peevish sense no more.
"Oh partial sleep! canst thou in smoky cottages
Stretch out the peasant's limbs on beds of straw,
And lay him fast, cram'd with distressful bread!
Yet in the softest breeze of peaceful night,
Under the canopies of costly state,

Tho' lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody,
Refuse one moment's slumber to a Princess?
Oh mockery of Greatness! But see,
He comes, the rude disturber of my pillow.

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. Ha ! still in tears ! let them flow on ; they're signs

Of a substantial grief—why don't she die ?

She must, my interest will not let her live.

The fair *Elizabeth* hath caught my eye ;

My heart's vacant, and she shall fill her place.

They say, that women have but tender hearts :

'Tis a mistake, I doubt,——I've found 'em tough :

They'll bend indeed——but he must strain that cracks 'em.

All I can hope's to throw her into sickness,

That I may lend her a physician's help.

So, madam, what you still take care, I see,

To let the world believe I love you not.

This outward mourning now has malice in't,

So have these fallen, disobedient tears ;

I'll have you tell the world I doat on you.

La. Anne. I wish I cou'd——but 'twill not be believ'd.

Have I deserv'd this usage ?

Glo'st. You have—you do not please me, as at first.

La. Anne. What have I done ? What horrid crime committed ?

Glo'st. To me the worst of crimes ; out-liv'd my liking.

La. Anne. If that be criminal, just Heav'n be kind,

And take me while my penitence is warm ;

Oh Sir, forgive, and kill me.

Glo'st. Umph ! no——the meddling world will call that murder :

And I wou'd have 'em think me pitiful :

Now wert thou not afraid of self-destruction,

Thou hast a fair excuse for't.

La. Anne. How fain wou'd I be friends with Death !——

Oh name it.

Glo'st. Thy husband's hate ; nor do I hate thee only
From the dull'd edge of sated appetite,

But from the eager love I bear another.
Some call me hypocrite——what think'st thou now?
Do I dissemble?

La. Anne. Thy vows of love to me were all dissim-
bled.

Glo'st. Not one——for when I told thee so I lov'd;
Thou art the only soul I never yet deceiv'd;
And 'tis my honesty that tells thee now,
With all my heart I hate thee.

If this have no effect, she is immortal. [Aside.

La. Anne. Forgive me, Heaven, that I forgave this
man.

Oh may my story told in after-ages,
Give warning to our easy sex's ears;
May it unveil the hearts of men, and strike
Them deaf to their dissimulated love.

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. My Lord, his Grace of *Buckingham* attends
Your Highness' pleasure.

Glo'st. Wait on him——I'll expect him here.

[Exit Catesby.

Your absence, madam, will be necessary.

La. Anne. Wou'd my death were so—— [Exit.

Glo'st. It may be shortly.

Enter Buckingham.

My cousin, what say the Citizens?

Buck. Now, by our hopes, my Lord, they are sense-
less stones:

Their hesitating fear has struck 'em dumb.

Glo'st. Touch'd you the bastardy of *Edward's* chil-
dren?

Buck. I did, with his contract to Lady *Lucy*;

Nay, his own bastardy, and tyranny for trifles:

Laid open all your victories in *Scotland*,

Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace;

Your bounty, justice, fair humility;

Indeed left nothing that might gild our cause
 Untouch'd, or slightly handled in my talk :
 And when my oration drew towards an end,
 I urg'd of them, that lov'd their country's good,
 To do you right, and cry, *Long live King Richard.*

Glo'st. And did they so?

Buck. Not one, by Heaven—but each like statues
 fix'd,

Speechless and pale, star'd in his fellow's face ;
 Which when I saw, I reprehended them,
 And ask'd the *Mayor* what meant this wilful silence ?
 His answer was, the people were not us'd
 To be spoken to but by the *Recorder* ;

Who then took on him to repeat my words,
 Thus saith the *Duke*, thus hath the *Duke* inferr'd ;
 But nothing urg'd in warrant from himself.

When he had done, some followers of my own,
 At th' lower end of th' hall hurl'd up their caps,
 And some ten voices cry'd, *God save King Richard !*

At which I took the 'vantage of those few,
 And cry'd, Thanks, gentle citizens, and friends :
 This general applause and chearful shout
 Argues your wisdom, and your love to *Richard* :
 And even here broke off, and came away.

Glo'st. Oh tongueless blocks ! Wou'd they not
 speak ?

Will not the *Mayor* then, and his brethren come ?

Buck. The *Mayor* is here at hand—feign you some
 fear,

And be not spoke with, but by mighty suit.
 A prayer-book in your hand, my Lord, were well,
 Standing between two Churchmen of repute ;
 For on that ground I'll make an holy descant ;
 Yet be not easily won to our requests ;
 Seem, like the virgin, fearful of your wishes.

Glo'st. My other self—my counsel's confistory !
 My oracle ! my prophet ! my dear cousin !
 I, as a child, will go by thy direction.

Buck. Hark ! the Lord *Mayor's* at hand—away, my
 Lord ;

Nor doubt, but yet we reach our point propos'd.

Glo'st. We cannot fail, my Lord, while you are pilot!

A little flattery sometimes does well. [Exit.

Enter Lord Mayor and Citizens.

Buck. Welcome, my Lord; I dance attendance here,
I'm afraid the Duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter Catesby.

Now, *Catesby*, what says your Lord to my request?

Catesby. My Lord, he humbly does intreat your Grace

To visit him to-morrow, or next day:
He's now retir'd with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation;
And in no worldly suits wou'd he be mov'd
To interrupt his holy exercise.

Buck. Return, good *Catesby*, to the gracious Duke;
Tell him, myself, the *Mayor*, and *Citizens*,
In deep designs, in matters of great moment,
No less importing than our general good,
Are come to have some conference with his Grace.

Catesby. My Lord, I'll instantly inform his Highness.

Buck. Ah, my Lord! this prince is not an *Edward*;
He is not lolling on a lewd love bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans;
But with two deep divines in sacred praying:
Happy were *England*, wou'd this virtuous prince
Take on himself the toil of sovereignty.

Ld. Mayor. Happy indeed, my Lord.
He will not, sure, refuse our proffer'd love.

Buck. Alas, my Lord! you know him not; his mind's
Above this world — he's for a crown immortal.

Look there, his door opens : now where's our hope ?

Ld. Mayor. See where his Grace stands, 'tween two Clergymen !

Buck. Ay, ay, 'tis there he's caught — there's his ambition.

Ld. Mayor. How low he bows to thank 'em for their care !

And see ! a prayer-book in his hand !

Buck. Wou'd he were King, we'd give him leave to pray :

Methinks I wish it for the love he bears the City.

How have I heard him vow, he thought it hard

The *Mayor* shou'd lose his title with his office.

Well, who knows ? He may be won.

Ld. Mayor. Ah, my Lord !

Buck. See, he comes forth — my friends, be resolute ;

I know he's cautious to a fault, but do not

Leave him till our honest suit be granted.

Enter Glo'ster with a Book.

Glo'st. Cousin of *Buckingham*,
I do beseech your Grace to pardon me,
Who, earnest in my zealous meditation,
So long deferr'd the service of my friends ;
Now do I fear I've done some strange offence,
That looks disgracious in the City's eye. If so,
'Tis just you shou'd reprove my ignorance.

Buck. You have, my Lord ; we wish your Grace,
On our intreaties, wou'd amend your fault.

Glo'st. Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land ?

Buck. Know then, it is your fault, that you resign
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Fair *England's* throne, your own due right of birth,
To the corruption of a blemish'd stock ;
While in the mildness of your sleeping thoughts,
(Which here we waken to our country's good)
'This wounded *Isle* does want her proper limbs,
Which to recure, join'd with those loyal men,

Your very worshipful, and loving friends ;
And by their zealous instigation,
In this just cause, I come to move your Highness,
That on your gracious self you'd take this charge,
And kingly government of this your land,
Not as protector, steward, substitute,
Or lowly factor for another's gain ;
But as successively from blood to blood,
Your own by right of birth, and lineal glory.

Glo'st. I cannot tell, if to depart in silence,
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof,
Fits best with my degree, or your condition ;
Therefore to speak in just refusal of your suit,
And then in speaking not to check my friends ;
Definitively thus I answer you :
Your love deserves my thanks ; but my desert-
Unmeritable, shuns your fond request ;
For, Heav'n be thank'd, there is no need of me ;
The royal stock has left us royal fruit,
Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of Time,
Will well become the seat of Majesty,
And make us (no doubt) happy by his reign.
On him I lay what you wou'd lay on me,
The right and fortune of his happier stars ;
Which Heav'n forbid my thoughts shou'd rob him of.

Buck. My Lord, this argues conscience in your
Grace ;

But circumstances well consider'd,
The weak respects thereof are nice and trivial.
You say that *Edward* was your brother's son,
So say we too, but not by *Edward's* wife ;
If solemn contracts are of any force,
That title Justice gave to Lady *Lucy* :
Ev'n of his birth cou'd I severely speak,
Save that for reverence to some alive,
I give a sparing limit to my tongue.

Ld. Mayor. Upon our knees, my Lord, we beg your
Grace

To wear this precious robe of dignity,
Which on a child must fit too loose and heavy ;

'Tis yours, befitting both your wisdom, and your birth.

Catesby. My Lord, this coldness is unkind,
Nor suits it with such ardent loyalty.

Buck. Oh make 'em happy! Grant their lawful suit.

Glo'st. Alas! why wou'd you heap this care on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty.

I thank you for your loves, but must declare
(I do beseech you take it not amiss)

I will not, dare not, must not yield to you.

Buck. If you refuse us, thro' a soft remorse,

Loth to depose the child your brother's son,

(As well we know your tenderness of heart)

Yet know, tho' you deny us to the last,

Your brother's son shall never reign our king,

But we will plant some other in the throne,

To the disgrace and downfall of your house:

And thus resolv'd, I bid you, Sir, farewell.

My Lord, and Gentlemen, I beg your pardon

For this vain trouble—My intent was good,

I wou'd have serv'd my country and my king,

But 'twill not be—Farewel, 'till next we meet.

Ld. Mayor. Be not too rash, my Lord, his Grace relents.

Buck. Away, you but deceive yourselves. [Exit.

Catesby. Sweet prince, accept their suit.

Ld. Mayor. If you deny us, all the land will rue it.

Glo'st. Call him again—you will enforce me to

A world of cares—I am not made of stone,

But penetrable to your kind intreaties;

Tho' Heav'n knows, against my own inclining.

Enter Buckingham.

Cousin of *Buckingham*, and sage, grave men,

Since you will buckle Fortune on my back,

To bear her burthen, whether I will or no,

I must have patience to endure the load;

But if black scandal, or foul-fac'd reproach

Attend the sequel of your imposition,

Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me ;
For Heaven knows, as you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire of this.

Ld. Mayor. Heav'n guard your Grace ; we see it,
and will say it.

Glo'st. You will but say the truth, my Lord.

Buck. My heart's so full, it scarce has vent for
words.

My knee will better speak my duty now !
Long live our Sovereign, *Richard*, King of *England* !

Glo'st. Indeed, your words have touch'd me nearly,
cousin !

Pray rise—I wish you cou'd recal 'em.

Buck. It wou'd be treason now, my Lord ; to mor-
row,

If it so please your Majesty, from Council
Orders shall be given for your Coronation.

Glo'st. E'en when you please, for you will have it so.

Buck. To-morrow then we will attend your Majesty,
And now we take our leaves with joy.

Glo'st. Cousin, adieu — my loving friends, farewell.
I must unto my holy work again.

[*Exeunt all but Richard.*]

Why, now my golden dream is out——
Ambition, like an early friend, throws back
My curtains with an eager hand, o'erjoy'd
To tell me what I dreamt is true — A Crown !
Thou bright reward of ever-daring minds ;
Oh ! how thy awful glory fills my soul !
Nor can the means that got thee, dim thy lustre :
For, not men's love, fear pays thee adoration,
And fame not more survives from good than evil deeds :
Th' aspiring youth, that fir'd the *Ephesian* dome,
Outlives, in fame, the pious fool that rais'd it.
Conscience, lie still, more lives must yet be drain'd ;
Crowns got with blood, must be with blood maintain'd.

[*Exit.*]



A C T IV.

SCENE *the* Tower.

Enter Queen, Prince Edward, Duke of York, Dutchess of York, and Lady Anne in Tears.

P. Ed. **P**RAY, Madam, do not leave me yet,
For I have many more complaints to tell
you.

Queen. And I unable to redress the least.
What wou'dst thou say, my child?

P. Ed. Oh, mother, since I have lain i' th' *Tower*,
My rest has still been broke with frightful dreams,
Or shocking news has wak'd me into tears:
I'm scarce allow'd a friend to visit me;
All my old honest servants are turn'd off,
And in their rooms are strange ill-natur'd fellows,
Who look so bold, as they were all my masters;
And I'm afraid they'll shortly take you from me.

Dut. of York. Oh mournful hearing!

L a. Anne. Oh! unhappy prince!

D. of York. Dear brother, why do you weep so?
You make me cry too!

Queen. Alas! poor innocence!

P. Ed. Wou'd I but knew at what my uncle aims
If 'twere my crown, I'd freely give it him,
So he'd but let me 'joy my life in quiet.

D. of York. Why, will my uncle kill us, brother?

P. Ed. I hope he won't, we never injur'd him.

Queen. I cannot bear to see 'em thus. [*Weeping.*]

Enter Lord Stanley.

Stanley. Madam, I hope your Majesty will pardon
What I am griev'd to tell, unwelcome news!

Queen. Ah me! more sorrow yet! My Lord, we've
long

Despair'd of happy tidings; pray, what is't?

Stanley. On *Tuesday* last, your noble kinsmen, *Rivers*,

Grey, and Sir *Thomas Vaughan*, at *Pomfret*,
Were executed on a public scaffold.

Dut. of York. Oh dismal tidings!

P. Ed. Oh poor uncles! I doubt my turn is next.

La. Anne. Nor mine, I fear, far off.

Queen. Why then, let's welcome blood and massacre,
Yield all our throats to the fierce tiger's rage,
And die lamenting one another's wrongs;
Oh! I foresaw this ruin of our house.

[Weeps.]

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. Madam, the King
Has sent me to inform your Majesty,
That you prepare (as is advis'd from Council)
To-morrow for your royal coronation.

Queen. What do I hear? Support me, Heaven.

La. Anne. Despightful tidings! Oh, unpleasing
news!

Alas, I heard of this before, but could not
For my soul take heart to tell you of it.

Catesby. The King does farther wish your Majesty
Wou'd less employ your visits at the *Tower*;
He gives me leave t' attend you to the court,
And is impatient, madam, till he sees you.

La. Anne. Farewel to all; and thou, poor injur'd
Queen,

Forgive the unfriendly duty I must pay.

Queen. Alas, kind soul, I envy not thy glory,
Nor think I'm pleas'd thou'rt partner in our sorrow.

Catesby. Madam.

La. Anne. I come.

Queen. Farewel, thou woeful welcomer of glory.

Catesby. Shall I attend your Majesty?

La. Anne. Attend me! whither, to be crown'd?

Let me with deadly venom be anointed,
And die ere man can say, *Long live the Queen.*

Queen. Poor grieving heart! I pity thy complaining.

Lx. Anne. No more than with my soul I mourn for yours :

A long farewell to all. [Exit with Catesby.]

Stanley. Take comfort, madam.

Queen. Alas ! where is it to be found ?
Death and destruction follow us so close,
They shortly must o'ertake us.

Stanley. In *Brittany*,
My son in-law, the Earl of *Richmond*, still
Resides, who with a jealous eye observes
The lawless actions of aspiring *Glo'ster* ;
To him, wou'd I advise you, madam, fly
Forthwith for aid, protection, and redress :
He will, I'm sure, with open arms receive you.

Dut. of York. Delay not, madam.
For 'tis the only hope that Heav'n has left us.

Queen. Do with me what you please——for any
change
Must surely better our condition.

Stanley. I farther wou'd advise you, madam, this instant

To remove the Princes to some
Remote abode, where you yourself are mistress.

P. Ed. Dear madam, take me hence, for I shall
ne'er

Enjoy a moment's quiet here.

D. of York. Nor I; pray, mother, let me go too.

Queen. Come then, my pretty young ones, let's
away,

For here you lie within the falcon's reach,
Who watches but th' unguarded hour to seize you.

Enter Lieutenant.

Lieut. I beg your Majesty will pardon me ;
But the young Princes must, on no account,

Have egress from the Tower.
Nor must, (without the King's especial license)
Of what degree soever, any person
Have admittance to 'em—all must retire.

Queen. I am their mother, Sir, who else commands
'em?

If I pass freely, they shall follow me.
For you — I'll take the peril of your fault upon my-
self.

Lieut. My inclination, madam, would oblige you;
But I am bound by oath, and must obey;
Nor, madam, can I now with safety answer—
For this continued visit.

Please you, my Lord, to read these orders.

Queen. Oh heav'nly pow'rs! Shall I not stay with
'em?

Lieut. Such are the King's commands, madam.

Queen. My Lord!

Stanley. 'Tis too true—and it were in vain to oppose
'em.

Queen. Support me, Heav'n!

For life can never bear the pangs of such a parting.
Oh my poor children! Oh! distracting thought!
I dare not bid 'em (as I shou'd) farewell;
And then to part in silence, stabs my soul!

P. Ed. What, must you leave us, mother?

Queen. What shall I say?

[*Aside.*

But for a time, my loves—we shall meet again,
At least in Heaven.

D. of York. Won't you take me with you, mother?
I shall be so 'fraid to stay when you are gone.

Queen. I cannot speak to 'em, and yet we must
Be parted—then let these kisses say farewell.

Why! oh why! just Heav'n, must these be our last!

Dut. of York. Give not your grief such way—be
sudden when you part.

Queen. I will—since it must be—to Heav'n I leave
'em.

Hear me, ye guardian Powers of Innocence!
Awake or sleeping—Oh protect 'em still!

Still may their helpless youth attract men's pity,
That when the arm of cruelty is rais'd,
Their looks may drop the lifted dagger down
From the stern murderer's relenting hand,
And throw him on his knees in penitence.

Both Princes. O mother! mother!

Queen. Oh my poor children! [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE the Presence.

Discovering Glo'ster seated, Buckingham, Catesby, Ratcliff, Lovel, &c.

Glo'st. Stand all apart——Cousin of *Buckingham*,

Buck. My gracious Sovereign.

Glo'st. Give me thy hand;

At length by thy advice and thy assistance,

Is *Glo'ster* seated on the *English* Throne.

But say, my cousin,——

What, shall we wear these glories for a day?

Or shall they last, and we rejoice in 'em?

Buck. I hope for ages, Sir,——long may they grace you.

Glo'st. Oh *Buckingham*! now do I play the touchstone,

To try if thou be current friend indeed.

Young *Edward* lives, so does his brother *York*.

Now think what I wou'd speak.

Buck. Say on, my gracious Lord.

Glo'st. I tell thee, Cuz, I've lately had two spiders
Crawling upon my startled hopes——

Now tho' thy friendly hand has brush'd 'em from me,

Yet still they crawl offensive to my eyes;

I wou'd have some kind friend to tread upon 'em.

I wou'd be King, my Cousin.

Buck. Why, so I think you are, my Royal Lord.

Glo'st. Ha! am I King? 'Tis so——but——*Edward*
lives.

Buck. Most true, my Lord.

Glo'st. Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull.
Shall I be plain——I wish the bastards dead;
And I wou'd have it suddenly perform'd:
Now, cousin, canst thou answer me?

Buck. None dare dispute your Highness' pleasure.

Glo'st. Indeed! methinks thy kindness freezes,
cousin.

Thou dost refuse me then!——They shall not die.

Buck. My Lord, since 'tis an action cannot be
Recall'd, allow me but some pause to think,
I'll instantly resolve your Highness. [Exit.

Catesby. The King seems angry; see, he gnaws his
lip.

Glo'st. I'll henceforth deal with shorter-sighted fools;
None are for me that look into my deeds
With thinking eyes——

High-reaching *Buckingham* grows circumspect;
'Tis best on't is, it may be done without him,
Tho' not so well perhaps——Had he consented,
Why then the murder had been his, not mine.
We'll make a shift as 'tis——Come hither, *Catesby*;
Where's that same *Tirrel* whom thou told'st me of?
Hast thou given him those sums of gold I order'd?

Catesby. I have, my Liege.

Glo'st. Where is he?

Catesby. He waits your Highness' pleasure.

Glo'st. Give him this ring, and say myself
Will bring him farther orders instantly. [Exit Catesby.
The deep revolving Duke of *Buckingham*
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsels:
Has he so long held out with me untir'd,
And stops he now for breath? Well, be it so.

Enter Lord Stanley.

How now, Lord *Stanley*, what's the news?

Stanley. I hear, my Liege, the Lord Marquis of *Dor-*
set
Is fled to *Richmond*, now in *Brittany*.

Glo'st. Why, let him go, my Lord, he may be spar'd.

Hark thee, *Ratcliff*, when saw'st thou *Anne* my Queen?

Is she still weak? Has my Physician seen her?

Ratcliff. He has, my Lord, and fears her mightily.

Glo'st. But he's exceeding skilful, she'll mend shortly.

Ratcliff. I hope she will, my Lord.

Glo'st. And if she does, I have mistook my man.

I must be marry'd to my brother's daughter,

At whom I know the *Briton*, *Richmond*, aims;

And by that knot, looks proudly on the crown.

But then to stain me with her brothers blood;

Is that the way to wooe the sister's love?

No matter what's the way—for while they live,

My goodly kingdom's on a weak foundation.

'Tis done, my daring heart's resolv'd ——— they're dead!

Enter Buckingham.

Buck. My Lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late request that you did sound me in.

Glo'st. Well, let that rest ——— *Dorset* is fled to
Richmond.

Buck. I have heard the news, my Lord.

Glo'st. *Stanley*, he's your near kinsman—well, look
to him.

Buck. My Lord, I claim that gift, my due by promise,

For which your honour and your faith's engag'd;

The Earldom of *Hereford*, and those moveables,

Which you have promised I shall possess.

Glo'st. *Stanley*, look to your wife, if she convey
Letters to *Richmond*, you shall answer it.

Buck. What says your Highness to my just request?

Glo'st. I do remember me, *Harry* the Sixth
Did prophesy, that *Richmond* shou'd be King.

When *Richmond* was a little peevish boy.
'Tis odd——a King, perhaps——

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. My Lord, I have obey'd your Highness' orders.

Buck. May it please you to resolve me in my suit:

Glo'st. Lead *Tirrel* to my closet, I'll meet him.

Buck. I beg your Highness' ear, my Lord.

Glo'st. I'm busy——thou troublest me——I'm not i' th' vein. *[Exit.]*

Buck. Oh patience, Heav'n! Is't thus he pays my service?

Was it for this I rais'd him to the Throne?

Oh! if the peaceful dead have any sense

Of those vile injuries they bore, while living;

Then sure the joyful souls of blood-suck'd *Edward,*

Henry, Clarence, Hastings, and all that through

His foul corrupted dealings have miscarry'd,

Will from the walls of Heav'n in smiles look down

To see this Tyrant tumbling from his Throne.

His fall unmourn'd, and bloody as their own. *[Exit.]*

SCENE, the Tower.

Enter Tirrel, Dighton, and Forrest.

Tirrel. Come, gentlemen,

Have you concluded on the means?

Forrest. Smothering will make no noise, Sir.

Tirrel. Let it be done i'th' dark——for shou'd you see

Their young faces, who knows how far their looks

Of innocence may tempt you into pity?

Forrest. 'Tis ease, and living well, makes innocence:

I hate a face less guilty than my own;

Were all that now seem honest, deep as we

In trouble, and in want, they'd all be rogues.

Tirrel. Stand back—— *Lieutenant*, have you brought the keys?

Enter Lieutenant.

Lieut. I have 'em, Sir.

Tirrel. Then here's your warrant to deliver 'em.

[*Giving a ring.*]

Lieut. Your servant, Sir.

What can this mean? why at this dead of night

To give 'em too! 'Tis not for me t'enquire. [*Exit.*]

Tirrel. There, gentlemen;

[*Exeunt severally.*]

That way——you have no farther need of me.

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. Wou'd it were done:

There is a busy something here,

That foolish custom has made terrible

To the intent of evil deeds; and Nature too,

As if she knew me womanish, and weak,

Tugs at my heart-strings with complaining cries,

To talk me from my purpose——

And then the thoughts of what men's tongues will
say,

Of what their hearts must think;

To have no creature love me living, nor

My memory when dead.

Shall future ages, when these children's tale

Is told, drop tears in pity of their hapless fate,

And read with detestation the misdeeds of *Glo'ster*,

The crook-back'd Tyrant, cruel, barbarous,

And bloody——Will they not say too,

That to possess the crown, nor laws divine

Nor human stopp'd my way?—Why let 'em say it;

They can't but say I had the crown;

I was not fool as well as villain.

Hark! the murder's doing: Princes, farewell,

To me there's musick in your passing-bell.

Enter Tirrel.

Tirrel. 'Tis done ; the barbarous bloody act is done.
Ha ! the King——his coming hither at this
Late hour, speaks him impatient for the news.

Enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. Now, my *Tirrel*, how are the 'brats dispos'd ?
Say, am I happy ? Hast thou dealt upon 'em ?

Tirrel. If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, then, Sir, be happy,
For it is done.

Glo'st. But didst thou see 'em dead ?

Tirrel. I did, my Lord.

Glo'st. And bury'd, my good *Tirrel* ?

Tirrel. In that I thought to ask your Grace's pleasure.

Glo'st. I have it——I'll have e'm sure——get me
a coffin

Full of holes, let 'em be both cramm'd into it,
And hark thee, in the night-tide throw 'em down
The *Thames*——once in, they'll find the way to the
Bottom ;

Mean time, but think how I may do thee good,
And be inheritor of thy desire.

Tirrel. I humbly thank your Highness.

Glo'st. About it straight, good *Tirrel*.

Tirrel. Conclude it done, my Lord. [*Exit.*]

Glo'st. Why then my loudest fears are hush'd ;
The sons of *Edward* have eternal rest,
And *Anne* my wife has bid this world good night :
While fair *Elizabeth*, my beautiful niece,
Like a new morn, lights onward to my wishes.

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. My Lord,

Glo'st. Good news, or bad, that thou com'st in so bluntly ?

Catesby. Bad news, my Lord ; *Morton* is fled to *Richmond*,

And *Buckingham*, back'd with the hardy *Welshmen*,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

Glo'st. *Morton* with *Richmond*, touches me more near

Than *Buckingham*, and his rash-levy'd numbers.

But come, dangers retreat, when boldly they're confronted,

And dull delays lead impotence and fear ;

Then fiery expedition raise my arm,

And fatal may it fall on crush'd rebellion.

Let's muster men, my council is my shield,

We must be brief when traitors brave the field.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Queen, and Dutchess of York.

Queen. Oh my poor children—— Oh my tender babes !

My unblown flowers, pluck'd by untimely hands ;

If yet your gentle souls fly in the air,

And be not fix'd in doom perpetual ;

Hover about me with your airy wings,

And hear your mother's lamentation.

Why slept their guardian Angels when this deed was done ?

Dut. of York. So many miseries have drain'd my eyes,

That my woe-wearied tongue is still and mute ;

Why shou'd calamity be full of words ?

Queen. Let's give 'em scope, for tho' they can't remove,

Yet do they ease affliction.

Dut. of York. Why then, let us be loud in exclamations

To *Richard*, haste, and pierce him with our cries ;

That from henceforth his conscience may out-tongue
The close whispers of his relentless heart.

Hark! his trumpet sounds — this way he must pass.

[Trumpet sounds a march.

Queen. Alas! I've not the daring to confront him.

Dut. of York. I have a mother's right, I'll force him
hear me.

Enter Glo'ster and Catesby, with Forces.

Glo'st. Who interrupts me in my expedition?

Dut. of York. Dost thou not know me? Art thou
not my son?

Glo'st. I cry you mercy, madam, is it you?

Dut. of York. Art thou my son?

Glo'st. Ay, I thank Heav'n, my father and your-
self.

Dut. of York. Then I command thee hear me.

Glo'st. Madam, I have a touch of your condition,
That cannot brook the accent of reproof.

Dut. of York. Stay, I'll be mild and gentle in my
words.

Glo'st. And brief, good mother, for I am in haste.

Dut. of York. Why, I have staid for thee (just Hea-
ven knows)

In torment and in agony.

Glo'st. And came I not at last to comfort you?

Dut. of York. No, on my soul, too well thou know'st
it,

A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;

Techy and wayward was thy infancy;

Thy prime of manhood, daring, bold, and stubborn;

Thy age confirm'd, most subtle, proud, and bloody.

Glo'st. If I am so disgracious in your eye,

Let me march on, and not offend you, madam;

Strike up the drum.

Dut. of York. Yet stay, I charge thee hear me.

Queen. If not, hear me, — for I have wrongs will
speak

Without a tongue — methinks the very sight

Of me thou'd turn thee into stone ;

Where are my children, *Glo'ster* ?

Dut. of York. Where is thy brother *Clarence* ?

Queen. Where *Hastings* ?

Dut. of York. *Rivers* ?

Queen. *Vaughan* ?

Dut. of York. *Grey* ?

Glo'st. A flourish, trumpet, strike alarum, drums,

Let not the Heav'n's hear these tell-tale women

Rail on the Heav'n's Anointed——Strike, I say.

[*Alarum of drums and trumpets.*

Either be patient, and intreat me fair,

Or with the clamorous report of war

Thus will I drown your exclamations.

Dut. of York. Then hear me, Heav'n, and Heav'n at
his latest hour

Be deaf to him, as he is now deaf to me.

Ere from this war he 'turn a conqueror,

Ye powers, cut off his dangerous thread of life,

Lest his black sins rise higher in account,

Than hell has pains to punish.

Mischance and sorrow wait thee to the field,

Heart's discontent, languid, and lean despair,

With all the hells of guilt, pursue thy steps for ever.

[*Exit.*

Queen. Tho' far more cause, yet much less power to
curse,

Abides in me——I say *Amen* to her.

Glo'st. Stay, madam, I wou'd beg some words with
you.

Queen. What canst thou ask, that I have now to
grant ?

Is't another son ? *Glo'ster*, I have none.

Glo'st. You have a beauteous daughter, call'd *Eliza-
beth.*

Queen. Must she die too ?

Glo'st. For whose fair sake I'll bring more good to
you,

Than ever you or yours from me had harm.

So in the *Lethe* of thy angry soul

Thou'lt drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest me the cruel cause of.

Queen. Be brief, lest that the process of thy kindness

Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

Glo'st. Know then, that from my soul I love the fair

Elizabeth, and will, with your permission,
Seat her on the Throne of *England*.

Queen. Alas! vain man, how canst thou wooe her?

Glo'st. That I wou'd learn of you,
As one being best acquainted with her humour.

Queen. If thou wilt learn of me, then wooe her thus:

Send to her, by the man that kill'd her brothers,
A pair of bleeding hearts——thereon engrave
Edward and *York*——then haply will she weep.
On this present her with an handkerchief,
Stain'd with their blood, to wipe her woe full eyes:
If this inducement move her not to love,
Read o'er the history of thy noble deeds;
Tell her, thy policy took off her uncles,
Clarence, *Rivers*, *Grey*, nay, and for her sake
Made quick conveyance with her dear aunt *Anne*.

Glo'st. You mock me, madam; this is not the way
To win your daughter.

Queen. There is no other way,
Unless thou cou'dst put on some other form,
And not be *Glo'ster*, that has done all this.

Glo'st. As I intend to prosper and repent,
So thrive I in my dangerous affairs
Of hostile arms; myself, myself confound,
Heav'n and Fortune bar me happy hours,
Day yield me not thy light, nor Night thy rest;
Be opposite all planets of good-luck
To my proceeding, if with dear heart's love,
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
I tender not the fair *Elizabeth*;
In her consists thy happiness and mine;
Without her, follows to myself and thee,

Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul,
 Death, desolation, ruin, and decay :
 It cannot, will not be avoided; but by this.

Queen. What shall I say? Still to affront his love,
 I fear will but incense him to revenge ;
 And to consent, I shou'd abhor myself :
 Yet I may seemingly comply, and thus
 By sending *Richmond* word of his intent,
 Shall gain some time to let my child escape him.
 It shall be so——

[*Aside.*]

I have consider'd, Sir, of your important wishes,
 And cou'd I but believe you real——

Glo'st. Now by the sacred Hosts of Saints above——

Queen. Oh do not swear, my Lord, I ask no oath,
 Unless my daughter doubt you more than I.

Glo'st. Oh my kind mother, (I must call you so).
 Be thou to her my love's soft orator ;
 Plead what I will be, not what I have been ;
 Not my deserts, but what I will deserve.
 And when this warlike arm shall have chastis'd
 The audacious rebel, hot-brain'd *Buckingham* ;
 Bound with triumphant garlands will I come,
 And lead your daughter to a Conqueror's bed.

Queen. My Lord, farewell——in some few days expect

To hear how fair a progress I have made :
 Till when be happy as you're penitent.

Glo'st. My heart goes with you to my love, farewell;

[*Exit Queen.*]

Relenting, shallow-thoughted woman !

Enter Ratcliff.

How now ? the news ?

Ratcliff. Most gracious Sovereign, on the *Western*
 coasts

Rides a most powerful navy, and our fears
 Inform us *Richmond* is their Admiral.
 There do they hull, expecting but the aid
 Of *Buckingham* to welcome them ashore.

[*Exit.*]

Glo'st. We must prevent him then——Come hither,
Catesby.

Catesby. My Lord, your pleasure!

Glo'st. Post to the Duke of *Norfolk* instantly,
Bid him straight levy all the strength and power
That he can make, and meet me suddenly
At *Salisbury*——Commend me to his Grace——away.
[Exit Catesby.]

Enter Lord Stanley.

Well, my Lord, what news have you gather'd?

Stanley. *Richmond* is on the seas, my Lord.

Glo'st. There let him sink——and be the seas on
him,

White-liver'd renegade——what does he there?

Stanley. I know not, mighty Sovereign, but by
guess.

Glo'st. Well, as you guess.

Stanley. Stirr'd up by *Dorset*, *Buckingham*, and *Mor-*
ton,

He makes for *England*, here to claim the Crown.

Glo'st. Traitor! the Crown——

Where is thy power then to beat him back?

Where be thy tenants, and thy followers?

The foe upon our coast, and thou no friends to meet
'em?

Or hast thou march'd them to the *Western* shore,

To give the rebels conduct from their ships?

Stanley. My Lord, my friends are ready all i'th'
North.

Glo'st. The *North*! why what do they do i'th' *North*,
When they shou'd serve their Sovereign in the *West*?

Stanley. They yet have had no orders, Sir, to
move:

If 'tis your royal pleasure they shou'd march,

I'll lead them on with utmost haste to join you;

Where, and what time your Majesty shall please.

Glo'st. What, thou would'st be gone to join with
Richmond?

Stanley. Sir, you have no cause to doubt my loyalty; I ne'er yet was, nor ever will be false.

Glo'st. Away then to thy friends, and lead 'em on To meet me——Hold, come back——I will not trust thee.

I've thought a way to make thee sure——your son,

George Stanley, Sir, I'll have him left behind;

And look your heart be firm,

Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

Stanley. As I prove true, my Lord, so deal with him.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Ratcliff.

Ratcliff. My Lord, the army of great *Buckingham*, By sudden floods, and falls of waters, Is half lost, and scatter'd : And he himself wander'd away alone, No man knows whither.

Glo'st. Has any careful officer proclaim'd Reward to him that brings the traitor in ?

Ratcliff. Such proclamation has been made, my Lord.

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. My Liege, the Duke of *Buckingham* is taken.

Glo'st. Off with his head——so much for *Buckingham*.

Catesby. My Lord, I am sorry I must tell more news.

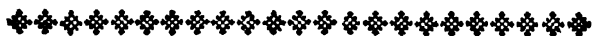
Glo'st. Out with it.

Catesby. The Earl of *Richmond* with a mighty power, Is landed, Sir, at *Milford* ; And to confirm the news, Lord Marquis *Dorset*, And Sir *Thomas Lovewell*, are up in *Yorkshire*.

Glo'st. Why ay, this looks rebellion——Ho ! my horse !

By Heav'n the news alarms my stirring soul ;

And as the wretch, whose fever-weaken'd joints,
 Like strengthless hinges buckle under life,
 Impatient of his fit, breaks like a fire,
 From his fond keeper's arms, and starts away :
 Ev'n so these war-worn limbs grown weak,
 From war's disuse, being now enrag'd with war,
 Feel a new fury, and are thrice themselves.
 Come forth, my honest sword, which here I vow,
 By my soul's hope, shall ne'er again be sheath'd ;
 Ne'er shall these watching eyes have needful rest,
 Till death has clos'd 'em in a glorious grave,
 Or fortune given me measure of revenge. [Exit.



A C T . V.

S C E N E . I.

Enter Richmond, Oxford, Blunt, Herbert, and others.

Rich. **T**HUS far into the bowels of the land
 Have we march'd on without impediment.

Glo'ster, the bloody and devouring boar,
 Whose ravenous appetite has spoil'd your fields,
 Laid this rich country waste, and rudely cropt
 Its ripen'd hopes of fair posterity,
 Is now even in the center of the Isle,
 As we're inform'd, near to the town of *Leicester* :
 From *Tamworth* thither, is but one day's march ;
 And here receive we from our father *Stanley*,
 Lines of fair comfort, and encouragement,
 Such as will help and animate our cause ;
 On which let's cheerly on, courageous friends,
 To reap the harvest of a lasting peace,
 Or fame more lasting from a well-fought war.

Oxford. Your words have fire, my Lord, and warm
 our men,

Who look'd methought, but cold before—dishearten'd
With the unequal numbers of the foe.

Rich. Why, double 'em still, our cause wou'd conquer 'em.

Thrice is he arm'd that has his quarrel just,
And he but naked, tho' lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted :
The very weight of *Glo'ster's* guilt shall crush him.

Blunt. His best of friends, no doubt, will soon be ours.

Oxford. He has no friends, but what are such thro' fear.

Rich. And we no foes but what are such to Heav'n.
Then doubt not, Heav'n's for us—let's on, my friends.
True hope ne'er tires, but mounts with eagle's wings ;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures Kings.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Bosworth-Field.*

Enter Glo'ster, Norfolk, Ratcliff, Surrey, &c.

Glo'st. Here pitch our tent, e'en in *Bosworth-field* :
My good Lord of *Norfolk*, the cheerful speed
Of your supply has merited my thanks.

Norfolk. I am rewarded, Sir, in having power
To serve your Majesty.

Glo'st. You have our thanks, my Lord ; up with my tent,
Here will I lie to-night — but where to-morrow ?
Well, no matter where — Has any careful friend
Discover'd yet the number of the rebels ?

Norfolk. My Lord, as I from spies am well inform'd,
Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

Glo'st. Why, our battalions treble that account ;
Besides the King's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse faction want.

Norfolk. Their wants are greater yet, my Lord —
those e'en
Of motion, life and spirit — Did you but know

How wretchedly their men disgrace the field !
Oh such a tatter'd host of mounted scare-crows !
So poor, so famish'd ; their executors,
The greedy crows, fly how'ring o'er their heads,
Impatient for their lean inheritances.

Glo'st. Now by St. *Paul*, we'll send 'em dinners
and apparel ;

Nay, give their fasting horses provender,
And after fight 'em.——How long must we stay,
My Lords, before these desperate fools will give
Us time to lay 'em with their faces upwards ?

Norfolk. Unless their famine saves our swords that
labour,

To-morrow's sun will light them to their ruin ;
So soon, I hear, they mean to give us battle.

Glo'st. The sooner still the better.——Come, my
Lords,

Now let's survey the 'vantage of the ground.
Call me some men of sound direction.

Norfolk. My gracious Lord——

Glo'st. What say'st thou, *Norfolk* ?

Norfolk. Might I advise your Majesty, you yet
Shall save the blood that may be shed to-morrow.

Glo'st. How so, my Lord ?

Norfolk. The poor condition of the rebels tells me,
That on a pardon offered to the lives
Of those who instantly shall quit their arms,
Young *Richmond* ere to-morrow's dawn were friendless.

Glo'st. Why that indeed was our Sixth *Harry's* way,
Which made his reign one scene of rude commotion.
I'll be in men's despite a monarch ; not,
Let Kings that fear, forgive——Blows and revenge for
me. [Exit.]

Enter *Richmond*, *Oxford*, *Blunt*, *Sir William Brandon*, &c.

Rich. The weary sun has made a golden set,
And by yon ruddy brightness of the clouds,
Gives tokens of a goodly day to-morrow.

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Sir *William Brandon*, you shall bear my standard.
 Here have I drawn the model of our battle,
 Which parts in just proportion our small power :
 Here may each leader know his several charge.
 My Lord of *Oxford*, you Sir *Walter Herbert*,
 And you, Sir *William Brandon*, stay with me ;
 The Earl of *Pembroke* keeps his regiment.

Enter Soldier.

Sol. Sir, a gentleman that calls himself *Stanley*,
 Desires admittance to the Earl of *Richmond*.

Rich. Now by our hopes, my noble father-in-law ;
 Admit him——my good friends, your leave awhile.

Enter Lord Stanley.

My honour'd father ! on my soul
 The joy of seeing you this night, is more
 Than my most knowing hopes presag'd———What
 news ?

Stanley. I by commission blest thee from thy mother,
 Who prays continually for *Richmond's* good :
 The Queen too, has with tears of joy consented,
 Thou shouldst espouse *Elizabeth* her daughter,
 At whom the tyrant *Richard* closely aims.
 In brief (for now the shortest moment of
 My stay is bought with hazard of my life)
 Prepare thy battle early in the morning,
 (For so the season of affairs requires)
 And this be sure of, I, upon the first
 Occasion offer'd, will deceive some eyes,
 And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms,
 In which I had more forward been ere this,
 But that the life of thy young brother *George*
 (Whom for my pawn of faith stern *Richard* keeps)
 Wou'd then be forfeit to his wild revenge.
 Farewel, the rude enforcement of the time
 Denies me to renew those vows of love,
 Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon.

Rich. We may meet again, my Lord——

Stanley. Till then, once more farewell—be resolute and conquer. [Exit.]

Rich. Give him safe conduct to his regiment.

Well, Sirs, to-morrow proves a busy day ;

But come, the night's far spent——let's in to council ;

Captain, an hour before the sun gets up

Let me be wak'd——I will in person walk

From tent to tent, and early cheer the soldiers.

[Exeunt.]

S C E N E, *Bosworth-Field.*

Enter Glo'ster, Ratcliff, Norfolk, and Catesby.

Glo'st. *Catesby.*

Catesby. Here, my Lord.

Glo'st. Send out a pursuivant at arms

To *Stanley's* regiment : bid him 'fore sun-rise

Meet me with his power, or young *George's* head

Shall pay the forfeit of his cold delay.

What, is my beaver easier than it was,

And all my armour laid into my tent ?

Catesby. It is, my Liege ; all is in readiness.

Glo'st. Good *Norfolk*, hie thee to thy charge ;

Use careful watch——choose trusty centinels.

Norfolk. Doubt not, my Lord——

Glo'st. Be stirring with the lark, good *Norfolk*.

Norfolk. I shall, my Lord——

[Exit.]

Glo'st. Saddle *White Surrey* for the field to-morrow.

Is ink and paper ready ?

Catesby. It is, my Lord.

Glo'st. An hour after midnight, come to my tent,

And help to arm me—a good night, my friends.

[Exit.]

Catesby. Methinks the King has not that pleas'd alacrity,

Nor cheer of mind that he was wont to have.

Ratcliff. The mere effect of business ;
 You'll find him, Sir, another man i'th' field.
 When you shall see him with his beaver up,
 Ready to mount his neighing steed, with whom
 He, smiling, seems to have some wanton talk,
 Clapping his pamper'd sides to hold him still ;
 Then with a motion swift, and light as air,
 Like fiery *Mars*, he vaults him to the saddle ;
 Looks terror to the foe, and courage to his soldiers.

Catesby. Good-night to *Richmond* then ; for, as I
 hear,

His numbers are so few, and those so sick,
 And famish'd in their march, if he dares fight us—
 He jumps into the sea to cool his fever.
 But come, 'tis late—Now let us to our tents,
 We've few hours good before the trumpet wakes us.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Glo'ster from his Tent.

Glo'st. 'Tis now the dead of night, and half the
 world

Is in a lonely solemn darkness hung ;
 Yet I (so coy a dame is Sleep to me)
 With all the weary courtship of
 My care-tir'd thoughts can't win her to my bed ;
 Tho' ev'n the stars do wink, as 'twere with over-
 watching.

I'll forth and walk a-while—the air's refreshing,
 And the ripe harvest of the new-mown hay
 Gives it a sweet and wholesome odour :
 How awful is this gloom—and hark, from camp to
 camp

The hum of either army stilly sounds ;
 That the fixt centinels almost receive
 The secret whispers of each other's watch :

Steed threatens steed in high and boastful neighings,
 Piercing the night's dull ear—Hark, from the
 tents

The armourers accomplishing the knights ;

With clink of hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation ; while some
Like sacrifices, by their fires of watch,
With patience sit, and inly ruminate
The morning's danger——By yon Heav'n, my stern
Impatience chides the tardy-gated night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, does limp
So tediously away——I'll to my couch,
And once more try to sleep her into morning.

[Lies down ; a groan is heard.]

Ha ! what means that dismal voice ? Sure 'tis
The echo of some yawning grave,
That teems with an untimely ghost——'Tis gone !
'Twas but my fancy, or perhaps the wind,
Forcing his entrance thro' some hollow cavern.
No matter what—I feel my eyes grow heavy. [Sleeps.]

*King Henry's Ghost, Lady Anne's Ghost, and the Ghosts
of the young Princes rise.*

K. Henry. Oh ! thou whose unrelenting thoughts,
not all

The hideous terrors of thy guilt can shake,
Whose conscience, with thy body, ever sleeps,
Sleep on ; while I, by Heaven's high ordinance,
In dreams of horror wake thy frightful soul :
Now give thy thoughts to me ; let 'em behold
These gaping wounds, which thy death-dealing hand
Within the *Tower* gave my anointed body ;
Now shall thy own devouring conscience gnaw
Thy heart, and terribly revenge my murder.

P. Ed. Richard, dream on, and see the wand'ring
Spirits

Of thy young nephews, murder'd in the *Tower* :
Cou'd not our youth, our innocence persuade
Thy cruel heart to spare our harmless lives ?
Who, but for thee, alas, might have enjoy'd
Our many promis'd years of happiness.
No soul, save thine, but pities our misusage ;
Oh, 'twas a cruel deed ! therefore alone

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Unpitying, unpity'd shalt thou fall.

La. Anne. Think on the wrongs of wretched *Anne*,
thy wife ;

Ev'n in the battle's heat remember me ;
And edgeless fall thy sword—despair and die.

K. Henry. The morning's dawn has summon'd me
away ;

Now, *Richard*, wake in all the helts of guilt ;
And let that wild despair, which now does prey
Upon thy mangled thoughts, alarm the world.
Awake, *Richard* ; awake to guilty minds
A terrible example.

[*All Ghosts sink.*]

Glo'st. Give me a horse—bind up my wounds !
Have mercy, Heav'n ! Ha ! soft ! 'twas but a dream ;
But then so terrible, it shakes my soul :
Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh ;
My blood grows chilly, and I freeze with horror :
Oh tyrant Conscience ! how dost thou afflict me ?
When I look back, 'tis terrible retreating :
I cannot bear the thought, nor dare repent.
I am but man, and, Fate, do thou dispose me.
Who's there ?

Enter Catesby.

Catesby. 'Tis I, my Lord ; the early village cock
Has thrice done salutation to the morn ;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.

Glo'st. Oh *Catesby* ! I have had such horrid dreams.

Catesby. Shadows, my Lord——below the foldier's
heeding.

Glo'st. Now by my this day's hopes——Shadows to-
night

Have struck more terror to the soul of *Richard*,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Arm'd all in proof, and led by shallow *Richmond*.

Catesby. Be more yourself, my Lord : consider, Sir,
Were it but known a dream had frightened you,
How wou'd your animated foes presume on't ?

Glo'st. Perish that thought !—No, never be it said

That Fate itself could awe the soul of *Richard*.
Hence babbling dreams ; you threaten here in vain ;
Conscience avaunt, *Richard's* himself again :
Hark ! the shrill trumpet sounds, to horse, away,
My soul's in arms, and eager for the fray. [Exeunt.

Enter Richmond, Oxford, Soldiers, &c.

Rich. Halt.

Sol. Halt—halt.

Rich. How far into the morning is it, friends ?

Oxford. Near four, my Lord.

Rich. 'Tis well——

I am glad to find we are such early stirrers.

Oxford. Methinks the foe's less forward than we
thought 'em ;

Worn, as we are, we brave the field before 'em.

Rich. Come, there looks life in such a cheerful
haste ;

If dreams shou'd animate a soul resolv'd,
I'm more than pleas'd with those I've had to-night ;
Methought that all the ghosts of them, whose bodies
Richard murder'd, came mourning to my tent,
And rous'd me to revenge 'em.

Oxford. A good omen, Sir——Hark the trumpet of
The enemy : it speaks them on the march.

Rich. Why then let's on, my friends, to face them ;
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As mild behaviour and humility :
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Let us be tigers in our fierce deportment :
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
Shall be this body on the earth's cold face ;
But if we thrive, the glory of the action
The meanest here shall share his part of :
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords,
Sound drums and trumpets, boldly and cheerfully,
The word's *Saint George, Richmond, and Victory !*

[Exeunt.

Enter Glo'ster, Catesby, &c.

Glo'st. Who saw the sun to-day ?

Catesby. He has not yet broke forth, my Lord.

Glo'st. Then he disdains to shine—for by the clock
He shou'd have brav'd the east an hour ago :
Not shine to-day ! Why, what is that to me,
More than to *Richmond* ? For the self-same Heav'n
That frowns on me, looks low'ring upon him.

Enter Norfolk with a Paper.

Norfolk. Prepare, my Lord, the foe is in the field.

Glo'st. Come, bustle, bustle ; caparison my horse,
Call forth Lord *Stanley*, bid him bring his power ;
Myself will lead the foldiers to the plain.

[Exit Catesby.]

Well, *Norfolk*, what think'st thou now ?

Norfolk. That we shall conquer—but on my tent
This morning early was this paper found.

Glo'st. *[Reads.]* ' *Jockey of Norfolk*, be not too bold,
' For *Dickon* thy master is bought and sold.' —

A weak invention of the enemy !

Come, gentlemen, now each man to his charge,

And ere we do bestride our foaming steeds,

Remember whom you are to cope withal,

A scum of *Britons*, rascals, runaways,

Whom their o'er-cloy'd country vomits forth

To desperate adventures, and destruction :

If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,

And not those bastard *Britons*, whom our fathers

Have in their own land beaten, spurn'd, and trod on,

And left 'em on record the heirs of shame :

Are those men fit to be the heirs of *England* ?

Enter Catesby.

What says Lord *Stanley*——Will he bring his power ?

Catesby. He does refuse, my Lord—he will not, Sir.

Glo'st. Off with his son *George's* head.

Norfolk. My Lord, the foe's already past the marsh——

After the battle, let young *Stanley* die.

Glo'st. Why, after be it then.——

A thousand hearts are swelling in my bosom :
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head,
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood ;
And thou, our warlike champion, thrice renown'd
St. George, inspire me with the rage of lions !
Upon 'em---charge---follow me.

[*Exeunt.*]

Several Excursions. Soldiers drove across the Stage by Glo'ster.

Re-enter Glo'ster.

Glo'st. What ho ! young *Richmond* ho ! 'tis *Richard* calls ;

I hate thee, *Harry*, for thy blood of *Lancaster* ;
Now if thou dost not hide thee from my sword,
Now while the angry trumpet sounds alarms,
And dying groans transpire the wounded air ;
Richmond, I say, come forth, and singly face me ;
Richard is harse with daring thee to arms.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Catesby, and Norfolk in Disorder.

Catesby. Rescue ! rescue ! my Lord of *Norfolk* haste,
The King chafes more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger ;
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for *Richmond* in the throat of death ;
Nay, haste, my Lord---the day's against us.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Glo'ster and Ratcliff.

Glo'st. A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse.

Ratcliff. This way, this way, my Lord—below yon thicket

Stands a swift horse—away, ruin pursues us ;
Withdraw, my Lord, for only flight can save you.

Glo'st. Slave ! I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die :
I think there be six *Richmonds* in the field,
Five have I slain to-day instead of him :
An horse ! an horse ! my kingdom for an horse.

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Glo'ster and Richmond, meeting.

Glo'st. Of one, or both of us the time is come.

Rich. Kind Heav'n, I thank thee, for my cause is thine ;

If *Richard's* fit to live, let *Richmond* fall.

Glo'st. Thy gallant bearing, *Harry*, I could 'plaud,
But that the spotted rebel stains the soldier.

Rich. Nor shou'd thy prowess, *Richard*, want my praise,

But that thy cruel deeds have stamp't thee tyrant.
So thrive my sword, as Heav'n's high vengeance draws it.

Glo'st. My soul and body on the action both.

Rich. A dreadful lay——here's to decide it.

[*Fight ; Richard falls.*

Glo'st. Perdition catch thy arm——the chance is thine.

But oh ! the vast renown thou hast acquired
In conquering *Richard*, does afflict him more
Than ev'n his body's parting with its soul.

Now let the world no longer be a stage

To feed Contention in a ling'ring act ;

But let one spirit of the first-born *Cain*

Reign in all bosoms ; that each heart may set

On bloody actions, the rude scene may end,

And darkness be the burier of the dead.

[*Dies.*

Rich. Farewel, *Richard*, and from thy dreadful end
May future Kings from tyranny be warn'd :

Had thy aspiring soul but stirr'd in virtue,
With half the spirit it has dar'd in evil,
How might thy fame have grac'd our *English* annals !
But as thou art, how fair a page thou'lt blotted !
Hark ! the glad trumpet speaks the field our own.

Enter Oxford, Lord Stanley, and Soldiers, with King Richard's Crown.

Oh welcome, friends ! My noble father, welcome !
Heav'n and our arms be prais'd, the day is ours !
See there, my Lords, stern *Richard* is no more.

Stanley. Victorious *Richmond*, well hast thou acquitted thee,

And see, the just reward that Heaven has sent thee :
Amongst the glorious spoils of *Bosworth-Field*,
We've found the crown, which now in right is thine :
'Tis doubly thine, by conquest and by choice !
Long live *Henry* the Seventh, King of *England*.

Rich. Next to just Heav'n, my noble countrymen,
I owe my thanks to you, whose love I'm proud of,
And ruling well shall speak my gratitude.
But now, my Lords——what friends of us are missing ?

Pray tell me, is young *George Stanley* living ?

Stanley. He is, my Liege, and safe in *Leicester* Town,
Whither, if you please, we may withdraw us.

Enter Blunt.

Blunt. My Lord, the Queen and fair *Elizabeth*
Her beauteous daughter, some few miles off,
Are on their way to 'gratulate your victory.

Rich. Ay, there indeed, my toil's rewarded :
Let us prepare to meet 'em, Lords——and then,
As we're already bound by solemn vows,
We'll twine the *Roses*, Red and White together,
And both from one kind stalk shall flourish.
England has long been mad and scar'd herself ;
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood ;

The ather rashly slaughter'd his own son ;
The bloody son, compell'd, has kill'd his fire.
Oh, now, let *Henry* and *Elizabeth*,
The true successors of each royal house,
Conjoin'd together, heal those deadly wounds ;
And be that wretch of all mankind abhorr'd,
That wou'd reduce these bloody days again ;
Ne'er let him live to taste our joy's increase,
That wou'd with treason wound fair *England's* peace.

END of the SECOND VOLUME.







